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*Her Eye submissive to the ground declining  
Inteneration of the Godlike Man.*

*Book IX. line 55.*

*Willien del.*

*E. Bunsford sculp.*

*Pub. by J. Walker, Paternoster Row, and J. Harris, St. Paul's Church Yard.*



LEONIDAS;

A Poem.

By  
Richard Henry



*The massive Orb levelled with resistless force  
Pulverised its brazen top  
And dashed its brassy base  
Full on the Persians' forehead.*

*Book III. l. 103.*

LONDON,

Published by J. Walker, Paternoster Row and J. Harris

St Paul's Church Yard.



# LEONIDAS:

A POEM.



BY

RICHARD GLOVER.

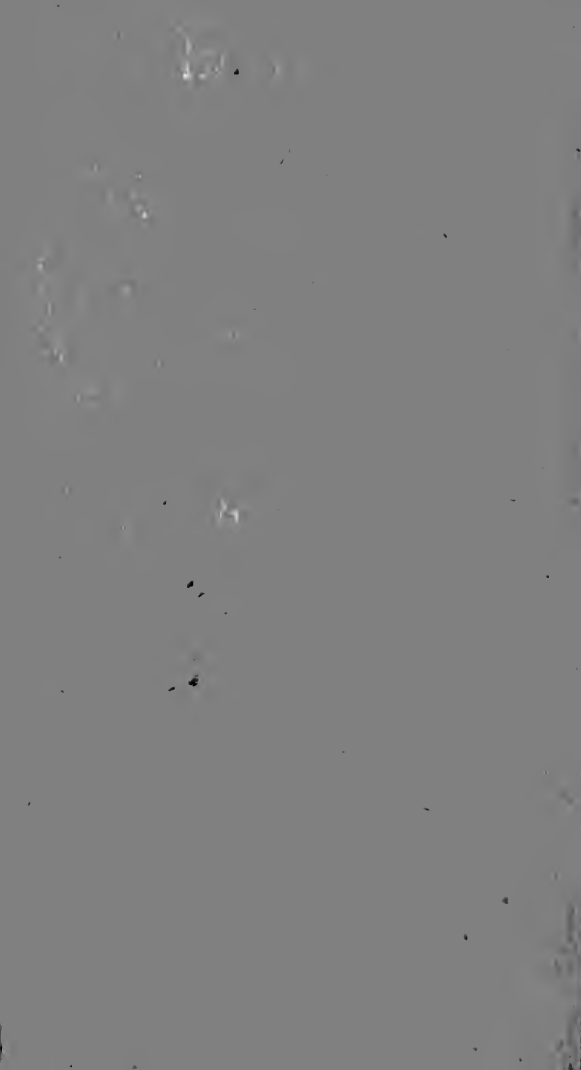


LONDON:

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1810.



## RICHARD GLOVER.

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**M**R. Glover, the author of the celebrated poem of Leonidas, was born in London, and was the son of John Glover, Esq. an eminent Hamburgh merchant, who married Miss West, sister of the Right Honourable Richard West, Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Mr. Glover's uncle being in that high situation, it was originally intended that he should be brought up to the law; but the Lord Chancellor dying when his nephew was very young, the plan was altered, and he was brought up to his father's profession.

Mr. Glover, by a lady he married (Miss Nunn) of the county of Essex, and with whom he received a considerable fortune, had three children; a daughter, who died young; Captain Glover, who died in the service of his country off the island of Jamaica, commanding his Majesty's ship Janus; and Richard, his surviving son, who served in the last parliament for the borough of Penryn, in Cornwall.

He received the whole of his education, under the Rev. Daniel Sanxay, at Cheam school; a place which he afterwards delighted to visit; and sometimes attended the anniversary held of late years in London, where he seemed happy in relating his juvenile adventures. At this seminary he distinguished himself by the quickness of his progress, and early began to exhibit specimens of his poetical powers.

As a merchant, he soon made a conspicuous figure: but his commercial affairs did not occupy his whole attention; he still found leisure to cultivate the study of poetry, and continued to associate with those who were eminent in literature and science. One of his earliest friends was Green, the ingenious, though obscure, author of that truly original poem entitled the "Spleen," which, in 1737, soon after his death, was published by Mr.

Glover. This excellent performance contains the following presage of his literary eminence, with an evident allusion to his *Leonidas*, which he had begun when very young.

But there's a youth that you can name,  
 Who needs no leading-strings to fame,  
 Whose quick maturity of brain  
 The birth of Pallas may explain:  
 Dreaming of whose depending fate,  
 I heard Melpomene debate;  
 This, this is he that was foretold  
 Should emulate our Greeks of old;  
 Inspir'd by me with sacred art,  
 He sings, and rules the varied heart;  
 If Jove's dread anger he rehearse,  
 We hear the thunder in his verse;  
 If he describe love turn'd to rage,  
 The furies riot on his page;  
 If he fair liberty and law,  
 By ruffian power expiring, draw,  
 The keener passions then engage  
 Aright, and sanctify their rage;  
 If he attempt disastrous love,  
 We hear those plaints that wound the grove;  
 Within the kinder passions glow,  
 And tears, distill'd from pity, flow.

The observation made upon Gray, by his friend, the late Earl of Orford, "that he never was a boy," has been applied to Glover. At the early age of sixteen, he wrote

A poem to the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton; which was followed by

*Leonidas*, first printed in 1737.

*London, or the Progress of Commerce*, a poem not unworthy of the author of *Leonidas*.

*Hosier's Ghost*, one of the most pathetic and beautiful ballads in our language.

Boadicea, } tragedies, performed both with much ap-  
 Medea,     } plause.

And the *Athenaid*, or a sequel to *Leonidas*, and forming a counterpart to it, in thirty books, presented

to the world, with a few alterations from the pen of a friend, in the year 1788.

He also wrote a second part of *Medea*, not yet performed.

*Leonidas* was inscribed to Lord Cobham; and, on its first appearance, was received by the public with great applause.

At the time of its publication, a zeal, or rather rage, for liberty prevailed in England. A constellation of great men, distinguished by their virtues, as well as by their talents, set themselves in opposition to the court. Every species of composition that bore the sacred name of freedom, recommended itself to their protection, and soon obtained possession of the public favour; hence a poem founded on the noblest principles of liberty, and displaying the most brilliant examples of patriotism, soon found its way into the world. It was praised in the warmest terms by Lyttleton and Doctor Pemberton, and passed through three editions in 1737 and 1738; but, as its favourable reception was not founded entirely on its intrinsic merits, it experienced afterwards, without deserving it, the fate of those literary productions which are indebted for a temporary celebrity to the influence of party-principles.

It first came out in nine books; but in the last edition published by the author (in 1770) was extended to twelve; and had also several new characters added, besides placing the old ones in new situations. The improvements were very considerable; but the public attention was not sufficiently alive to recompense the pains bestowed on this once popular performance.

Though not in the highest class of epic poems, it cannot be read without delight. It is characterized by a bold spirit of liberty, by generous, tender, and noble sentiments. The author every where appears a virtuous man and a good citizen. The characters are finely discriminated, as is justly exemplified in Dr. Pemberton's learned commentary; and the style possesses many poetical graces, though it is sometimes familiar and prosaic. It abounds in the affecting, the tender, and the beautiful, rather than in the heroic and sublime. The parting of *Leonidas* and his wife, is, perhaps, more

interesting than that of Hector and Andromache. The episode of Ariana and Teribazus is poetical and pleasing. On the whole, we may safely venture to place Leonidas by the side of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Statius's *Thebaid*, Camoens's *Lusiad*, and the *Henriade* of Voltaire.

Mr. Glover passed a great portion of his time with Mr. Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, Mr. George Lyttleton, afterwards Lord Lyttleton, Earl Temple, Lord Cobham, and many others of the same principles; his connexion with whom introduced him to the notice of Frederick Prince of Wales, who honoured him with his friendship, and distinguished him by his countenance and patronage.

His talents for public speaking, his knowledge of political affairs, and his information concerning trade and commerce, pointed him out to the merchants of London as a proper person to conduct their application to Parliament, on the subject of the neglect of their trade. He accepted the office; and in summing up the evidence gave very striking proofs of his oratorical powers. This remarkable speech was pronounced at the bar of the House of Commons, January 27, 1742, and soon afterwards published, under the title of "A short account of the late application to Parliament, made by the merchants of London, upon the neglect of their trade, with the evidence thereupon, as summed up by Mr. Glover." By his appearance in behalf of the merchants of London, he acquired, and with great justice, the character of an able and steady patriot; and, indeed, on every occasion, he shewed his zeal for the commercial interests of the nation, as well as his attachment to the welfare of his countrymen in general, and that of the city of London in particular.

Our author, being induced by the importunity of his friends, offered himself, in the year 1751, as a candidate for the place of Chamberlain of the City of London, in opposition to the late Thomas Harrison, Esq. Unfortunately for him, he did not declare his intention till most of the livery had engaged their votes; to which circumstance was ascribed the loss of his election. On this occasion he addressed the livery in a very manly and animated speech.



In the parliament which met at the accession of his present Majesty (1761), he was elected for Weymouth. He undertook to manage the interests of the merchants and traders of London concerned in the trade to Germany and Holland, and of the dealers in foreign linens, in their application to Parliament in May 1774. Both the speeches made on these occasions were published within the same year.

In 1775 he engaged on behalf of the West India merchants, in their application to Parliament, examined the witnesses, and summed up the evidence in the same masterly manner he had done on a former occasion. For the assistance he afforded the merchants in this business, he was complimented by them with a service of plate, of the value of 300*l*. The speech which he delivered in the house was printed in that year. This was the last opportunity he had of displaying in public his oratorical talents. Having now arrived at a period of life which demanded a recess from business, he retired, and wore out the remainder of his days with dignity and with honour, in the exercise of the virtues of private life, and in his attention to his muse. He died at his house in Albemarle-street, November 25, 1785, in the 75th year of his age, and was buried in the family-vault in St. Edmund the King's; in Lombard-street.

We shall conclude this short account of the life and writings of our Author by the following observations upon Leonidas, from the pen of Lyttleton.

“ Since I have read Leonidas,” says he (Common Sense, No. 10), “ I have been so full of all the beauties I met with in it, that, to give some vent, I found it necessary to write to you, and invite my countrymen to take part with me in the pleasure of admiring what so justly deserves their admiration: and in doing this I have yet a further view; I desire to do them good as well as please them; for never yet was an epic poem wrote with so noble and so useful a design; the whole plan and purpose of it being to shew the superiority of freedom over slavery; and how much virtue, public spirit, and the love of liberty, are preferable, both in their nature and effects, to riches, luxury, and the insolence of power.

" This great and instructive moral is set forth by an action the most proper to illustrate it of all that ancient or modern history can afford, enforced by the most sublime spirit of poetry, and adorned by all the charms of an active and warm imagination, under the restraint of a cool and sober judgment.

" And it has another special claim to protection; for, I will venture to say, there never was an epic poem which had so near a relation as this to common sense; the Author of it not having allowed himself the liberty, so largely taken by his predecessors, of making excursions beyond the bounds, and out of sight of it, into the airy regions of poetical mythology. There are neither fighting gods, nor scolding goddesses; neither miracles, nor enchantments; neither monsters, nor giants, in his work; but whatsoever human nature can afford that is most astonishing, marvellous, and sublime.

" And it has this particular merit to recommend it, that, though it has quite the air of an ancient epic poem, there is not so much as a single simile in it that is borrowed from any of the ancients; and yet I believe there is hardly any poem that has such a variety of beautiful comparisons; so just a confidence had the Author in the extent and rich abundance of his own imagination.

" The artful conduct of the principal design; the skill in connecting and adapting every episode to the carrying on and serving that design; the variety of characters, the great care to keep them, and distinguish each from the other by a propriety of sentiment and thought; all these are excellencies which the best judges of poetry will be particularly pleased with in *Leonidas*.

" Upon the whole, I look upon this poem as one of those few of distinguished worth and excellence, which will be handed down with respect to all posterity; and which, in the long revolution of past centuries, but two or three countries have been able to produce. And I cannot help congratulating my own, that, after having in the last age brought forth a Milton, she has in this produced two more such poets as we have the happiness to see flourish together; I mean Mr. Pope and Mr. Glover."

## PREFACE.

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TO illustrate the following Poem, to vindicate the subject from the censure of improbability, and to shew, by the concurring evidence of the best historians, that such disinterested public virtue did once exist, I have thought it would not be improper to fix the subsequent narration.

While Darius, the father of Xerxes, was yet on the throne of Persia, Cleomenes and Demaratus were kings in Lacedæmon, both descended from Hercules. Demaratus was unfortunately exposed by an uncertain rumour, which rendered his legitimacy suspected, to the malice and treachery of his colleague, who had conceived a personal resentment against him; for Cleomenes, taking advantage of this report, persuaded the Spartans to examine into the birth of Demaratus, and refer the difficulty to the oracle of Delphi; and was assisted in his perfidious designs by a near relation of Demaratus, named Leutychides, who aspired to succeed him in his dignity. Cleomenes found means to corrupt the priestess of Delphi, who declared Demaratus not legitimate. Thus, by the base practices of his colleague Cleomenes, and of his kinsman Leutychides, Demaratus was expelled from his regal office in the commonwealth; a Lacedæmonian, distinguished in action and council, and the only king of Sparta, who, by obtaining the Olympic prize in the chariot-race, had increased the lustre of his country. He went into voluntary banishment, and, retiring to Asia, was there protected by Darius; while Leutychides succeeded to the regal authority in Sparta. Upon the death of Cleomenes, Leonidas became king, who ruled, in conjunc-

tion with this Lentychides, when Xerxes, the son of Darius, invaded Greece. The number of land and naval forces which accompanied that monarch, together with the servants, women, and other usual attendants on the army of an eastern prince, amounted to upwards of five millions, as reported by Herodotus, who wrote within a few years after the event, and publicly recited his history at the Olympic games. In this general assembly, not only from Greece itself, but from every part of the world wherever a colony of Grecians was planted, had he greatly exceeded the truth, he must certainly have been detected, and censured by some among so great a multitude; and such a voluntary falsehood must have entirely destroyed that merit and authority which have procured to Herodotus the veneration of all posterity, with the appellation of the father of history. On the first news of this attempt on their liberty, a convention, composed of deputies from the several states of Greece, was immediately held at the Isthmus of Corinth, to consult on proper measures for the public safety. The Spartans also sent messengers to enquire of the oracle at Delphi into the event of the war, who returned with an answer from the priestess of Apollo, that either a king, descended from Hercules, must die, or Lacedæmon would be entirely destroyed. Leonidas immediately offered to sacrifice his life for the preservation of Lacedæmon; and marching to Thermopylæ, possessed himself of that important pass with three hundred of his countrymen; who, with the forces of some other cities in the Peloponnesus, together with the Thebans, Thespians, and the troops of those states which adjoined to Thermopylæ, composed an army of near eight thousand men.

Xerxes was now advanced as far as Thessalia; when, hearing that a small body of Grecians was assembled at Thermopylæ, with some Lacedæmonians at their head, and among the rest Leonidas, a descendant of Hercules, he dispatched a single horseman before to observe their numbers, and discover their designs. When this horseman approached, he could not take a view of the whole camp, which lay concealed behind a rampart, formerly raised by the Phocians at the entrance of Thermopylæ

on the side of Greece; so that his whole attention was engaged by those who were on guard before the wall, and who at that instant chanced to be the Lacedæmonians. Their manner and gestures greatly astonished the Persian. Some were amusing themselves in gymnastic exercises; others were combing their hair; and all discovered a total disregard of him, whom they suffered to depart, and report to Xerxes what he had seen; which appearing to that prince quite ridiculous, he sent for Demaratus, who was with him in the camp, and required him to explain this strange behaviour of his countrymen. Demaratus informed him that it was a custom among the Spartans to comb down and adjust their hair when they were determined to fight till the last extremity. Xerxes, notwithstanding, in the confidence of his power, sent ambassadors to the Grecians, to demand their arms, to bid them disperse, and become his friends and allies: which proposals being received with disdain, he commanded the Medes and Cissians to seize on the Grecians, and bring them alive into his presence. These nations immediately attacked the Grecians, and were soon repulsed with great slaughter: fresh troops still succeeded; but with no better fortune than the first, being opposed to an enemy not only superior in valour and resolution, but who had the advantage of discipline, and were furnished with better arms, both offensive and defensive.

Plutarch, in his Laconic Apothegms, reports, that the Persian king offered to invest Leonidas with the sovereignty of Greece, provided he would join his arms to those of Persia. This offer was too considerable a condescension to have been made before a trial of their force, and must therefore have been proposed by Xerxes after such a series of ill success as might probably have depressed the insolence of his temper; and it may be easily admitted, that the virtue of Leonidas was proof against any temptations of that nature. Whether this be a fact or not, thus much is certain, that Xerxes was reduced to extreme difficulties by this resolute defence of Thermopylæ; till he was extricated from his distress by a Malian, named Epialtes, who conducted twenty thou-

sand of the Persian army into Greece, through a pass which lay higher up the country, among the mountains of Oeta: whereas the passage at Thermopylæ was situated on the sea-shore between those mountains and the Malian bay. The defence of the upper pass had been committed to a thousand Phocians, who, upon the first sight of the enemy, inconsiderately abandoned their station, and put themselves in array upon a neighbouring eminence; but the Persians wisely avoided an engagement, and, with the utmost expedition, marched to Thermopylæ.

Leonidas no sooner received information that the Barbarians had passed the mountains, and would soon be in a situation to surround him, than he commanded the allies to retreat, reserving the three hundred Spartans and four hundred Thebans, whom, as they followed him with reluctance at first, he now compelled to stay. But the Thespians, whose number amounted to seven hundred, would not be persuaded by Leonidas to forsake him. Their commander was Demophilus; and the most eminent amongst them for his valour was Dithyrambus, the son of Harmatides. Among the Lacedæmonians, the most conspicuous, next to Leonidas, was Dieneces, who, being told that the multitude of Persian arrows would obscure the sun, replied, the battle would then be in the shade. Two brothers, named Alpheus and Maren, are also recorded for their valour, and were Lacedæmonians. Megistias, a priest, by birth an Acarnanian, and held in high honour at Sparta, refused to desert Leonidas, though entreated by him to consult his safety; but sent away his only son, and remained himself behind to die with the Lacedæmonians.

Herodotus relates, that Leonidas drew up his men in the broadest part of Thermopylæ; where, being encompassed by the Persians, they fell, with great numbers of their enemies: but Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and others, affirm, that the Grecians attacked the very camp of Xerxes in the night. Both these dispositions are reconcileable to probability. He might have made an attack on the Persian camp in the night, and in the morning have withdrawn his forces back to Thermopylæ, where they would be enabled to make the most

obstinate resistance, and sell their lives upon the dearest terms. The action is thus described by Diodorus. "The Grecians, having now rejected all thoughts of safety, preferring glory to life, unanimously called on their general to lead them against the Persians before they could be apprised that their friends had passed round the mountains. Leonidas embraced the occasion which the ready zeal of his soldiers afforded, and commanded them forthwith to dine as men who were to sup in Elysium. Himself, in consequence of this command, took a repast, as the means to furnish strength for a long continuance, and to give perseverance in danger. After a short refreshment, the Grecians were now prepared; and received orders to assail the enemies in their camp, to put all they met to the sword, and force a passage to the royal pavilion: when, formed into one compact body, with Leonidas himself at their head, they marched against the Persians, and entered their camp at the dead of night. The Barbarians, wholly unprepared, and blindly conjecturing that their friends were defeated, and themselves attacked by the united power of Greece, hurry together from their tents with the utmost disorder and consternation. Many were slain by Leonidas and his party, but much greater multitudes by their own troops, to whom, in the midst of this blind confusion, they were not distinguishable from enemies; for, as night took away the power of discerning truly, and the tumult was spread universally over the camp, a prodigious slaughter must naturally ensue. The want of command, of a watchword, and of confidence in themselves, reduced the Persians to such a state of confusion, that they destroyed each other without distinction. Had Xerxes continued in the royal pavilion, the Grecians, without difficulty, might have brought the war to a speedy conclusion by his death; but he, at the beginning of the tumult, betook himself to flight with the utmost precipitation; when the Grecians, rushing into the tent, put to the sword most of those who were left behind; then, while night lasted, they ranged through the whole camp in diligent search of the tyrant. When morning appeared, the Persians, perceiving the true state of things, held the inconsiderable number of their enemies

in contempt; yet were so terrified at their valour, that they avoided a near engagement; but, enclosing the Grecians on every side, showered their darts and arrows upon them at a distance, and, in the end, destroyed their whole body. In this manner fell the Grecians, who, under the conduct of Leonidas, defended the pass of Thermopylæ. All must admire the virtue of these men, who, with one consent, maintaining the post allotted by their country, cheerfully renounced their lives for the common safety of Greece, and esteemed a glorious death more eligible than to live with dishonour. Nor is the consternation of the Persians incredible. Who among those Barbarians could have conjectured such an event? who could have expected that five hundred men would have dared to attack a million? Wherefore shall not all posterity reflect on the virtue of these men, as the object of imitation, who, though the loss of their lives was the necessary consequence of their undertaking, were yet unconquered in their spirit; and, among all the great names delivered down to remembrance, are the only heroes who obtained more glory in their fall than others from the brightest victories? With justice may they be deemed the preservers of the Grecian liberty, even preferably to those who were conquerors in the battles fought afterwards with Xerxes; for the memory of that valour exerted in the defence of Thermopylæ, for ever dejected the Barbarians, while the Greeks were fired with emulation to equal such a pitch of magnanimity. Upon the whole, there never were any before these who attained to immortality through the mere excess of virtue; whence the praise of their fortitude hath not been recorded by historians only, but hath been celebrated by numbers of poets, among others, by Simonides, the lyric."

Pausanias, in his *Laconics*, considers the defence of Thermopylæ by Leonidas as an action superior to any achieved by his cotemporaries, and to all the exploits of preceding ages. "Never," says he, "had Xerxes beheld Greece, and laid in ashes the city of Athens, had not his forces under Hydarnes been conducted through a path over mount Oeta; and, by that means encompass-

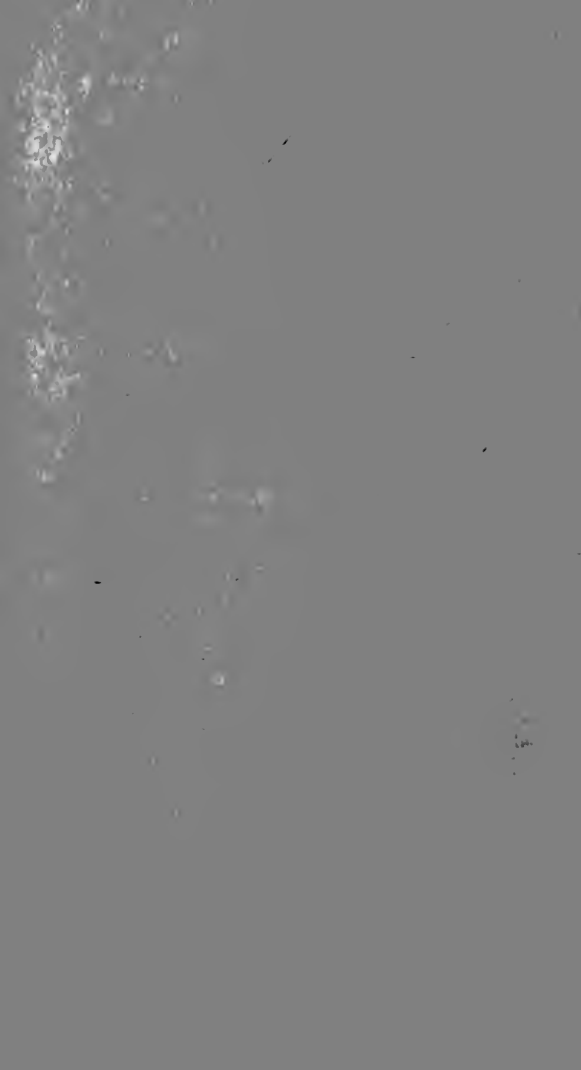


ing the Greeks, overcome and slain Leonidas. Nor is it improbable, that such a commander, at the head of such troops, should have maintained his post in so narrow a pass till the whole army of Xerxes had perished by famine. At the same time his navy had been miserably shattered by a storm, and worsted in an engagement with the Athenians at Artemisium.

To conclude, the fall of Leonidas and his brave companions, so meritorious to their country, and so glorious to themselves, hath obtained such a high degree of veneration and applause from past ages, that few among the ancient compilers of history have been silent on this amazing instance of magnanimity, and zeal for liberty; and many are the epigrams and inscriptions now extant, some on the whole body, others on particulars, who died at Thermopylæ, still preserving their memory in every nation conversant with learning, and at this distance of time still rendering their virtue the object of admiration and of praise.

I shall now detain the reader no longer than to take this public occasion of expressing my sincere regard for the Lord Viscount Cobham, and the sense of my obligations for the early honour of his friendship; to him I inscribe the following poem; and herein I should be justified, independent of all personal motives, from his Lordship's public conduct, so highly distinguished by disinterested zeal and unshaken fidelity to his country, not less in civil life than in the field: to him therefore a poem, founded on a character eminent for military glory and love of liberty, is due, from the nature of the subject.

R. GLOVER.



# LEONIDAS.

*BOOK I.*

## The Argument.

Xerxes, king of Persia, having drawn together the whole force of his empire, and passed over the Hellespont into Thrace, with a design to conquer Greece, the deputies from the several states of that country, who had some time before assembled themselves at the Isthmus of Corinth, to deliberate on proper measures for resisting the invader, were no sooner apprised of his march into Thrace, than they determined, without further delay, to dispute his passage at the straits of Thermopylæ, the most accessible part of Greece on the side of Thrace and Thessaly. Alpheus, one of the deputies from Sparta, repairs to that city, and communicates this resolution to his countrymen; who chanced that day to be assembled, in expectation of receiving an answer from Apollo, to whom they had sent a messenger to consult about the event of the war. Leutychides, one of their two kings, counsels the people to advance no further than the Isthmus of Corinth, which separates the Peloponnesus, where Lacedæmon was situated, from the rest of Greece; but Leonidas, the other king, dissuades them from it. Agis, the messenger, who had been deputed to Delphi, and brother to the queen of Leonidas, returns with the oracle; which denounces ruin to the Lacedæmonians, unless one of their kings lays down his life for the public. Leonidas offers himself for the victim. Three hundred more are appointed, all citizens of Sparta, and heads of families, to accompany, and die with, him at Thermopylæ. Alpheus returns to the Isthmus. Leonidas, after an interview with his queen, departs from Lacedæmon. At the end of six days he encamps near the Isthmus, when he is joined by Alpheus; who describes the auxiliaries, then waiting at the Isthmus; those who are already possessed of Thermopylæ, as also the pass itself; and concludes with relating the captivity of his brother, Polydorus, in Persia.

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK I.

THE virtuous Spartan, who resign'd his life  
To save his country at the Oetæan straits,  
Thermopylæ, when all the peopled east  
In arms with Xerxes fill'd the Grecian plains,  
O Muse, record! The Hellespont they pass'd,  
O'erpow'ring Thrace. The dreadful tidings swift  
To Corinth flew. Her isthmus was the seat  
Of Grecian council. Alpheus thence returns  
To Lacedæmon. In assembly full  
He finds the Spartan people with their kings;  
Their kings, who boast an origin divine,  
From Hercules descended. They the sons  
Of Lacedæmon had conven'd, to learn  
The sacred mandates of th' immortal gods  
That morn expected from the Delphian dome.  
But Alpheus sudden their attention drew,  
And thus address'd them. ' For immediate war,  
My countrymen, prepare. Barbarian tents  
Already fill the trembling bounds of Thrace.  
The Isthmian council hath decreed to guard  
Thermopylæ, the Locrian gate of Greece.'

Here Alpheus paus'd. Lentychides, who shar'd  
With great Leonidas the sway, uprose  
And spake. ' Ye citizens of Sparta, hear.  
Why from her bosom should Laconia send  
Her valiant race to wage a distant war  
Beyond the Isthmus? There the gods have plac'd  
Our native barrier. In this favour'd land,  
Which Pelops govern'd, us of Doric blood  
That Isthmus inaccessible secures.  
There let our standards rest. Your solid strength  
If once you scatter, in defence of states  
Remote and feeble, you betray your own,

And merit Jove's derision.' With assent  
The Spartans heard. Leonidas reply'd—

'O most ungen'rous counsel! most unwise!  
Shall we, confining to that Isthmian fence  
Our efforts, leave beyond it ev'ry state  
Disown'd, expos'd? Shall Athens, while her fleets  
Unceasing watch th' innumerable foes,  
And trust th' impending dangers of the field  
To Sparta's well-known valour, shall she hear  
That to Barbarian violence we leave  
Her unprotected walls? Her hoary sires,  
Her helpless matrons, and their infant race  
To servitude and shame? Her guardian gods  
Will yet preserve them. Neptune o'er his main,  
With Pallas, pow'r of wisdom, at their helms,  
Will soon transport them to a happier clime,  
Safe from insulting foes, from false allies;  
And eleutherian Jove will bless their flight.  
Then shall we feel the unresisted force  
Of Persia's navy, deluging our plains  
With inexhausted numbers. Half the Greeks,  
By us betray'd to bondage, will support  
A Persian lord, and lift th' avenging spear  
For our destruction. But, my friends, reject  
Such mean, such dang'rous counsels, which would blast  
Your long-establish'd honours, and assist  
The proud invader. O eternal king  
Of gods and mortals, elevate our minds!  
Each low and partial passion thence expel!  
Greece is our gen'ral mother. All must join  
In her defence, or sep'rate each must fall.'

This said, authority and shame controll'd  
The mute assembly. Agis too appear'd.  
He from the Delphian cavern was return'd,  
Where, taught by Phœbus on Parnassian cliffs,  
The Pythian maid unfolded heaven's decrees.  
He came; but discontent and grief o'ercast  
His anxious brow. Reluctant was his tongue,  
Yet seem'd full charg'd to speak. Religious dread  
Each heart relax'd. On ev'ry visage hung  
Sad expectation. Not a whisper told  
The silent fear. Intensely all were fix'd,

All still as death, to hear the solemn tale.  
 As o'er the western waves, when ev'ry storm  
 Is hush'd within its cavern, and a breeze,  
 Soft breathing, lightly with its wings along  
 The slacken'd cordage glides, the sailor's ear  
 Perceives no sound throughout the vast expanse;  
 None, but the murmurs of the sliding prow,  
 Which slowly parts the smooth and yielding main;  
 So through the wide and list'ning crowd no sound,  
 No voice, but thine, O Agis! broke the air;  
 While thus the issue of thy awful charge  
 Thy lips deliver'd. ' Spartans, in your name  
 I went to Delphi. I enquir'd the doom  
 Of Lacedæmon from th' impending war,  
 When in these words the deity reply'd —

“ Inhabitants of Sparta, Persia's arms  
 Shall lay your proud and ancient seat in dust,  
 Unless a king, from Hercules deriv'd,  
 Cause Lacedæmon for his death to mourn.’

As, when the hand of Perseus had disclos'd  
 The snakes of dire Medusa, all who view'd  
 The Gorgon features were congeal'd to stone,  
 With ghastly eyeballs, on the hero bent,  
 And horror, living in their marble form;  
 Thus, with amazement rooted where they stood,  
 In speechless terror frozen, on their kings  
 The Spartans gaz'd: but soon their anxious looks  
 All on the great Leonidas unite,  
 Long known his country's refuge. He alone  
 Remains unshaken. Rising, he displays  
 His godlike presence. Dignity and grace  
 Adorn his frame, where manly beauty joins  
 With strength Herculean. On his aspect shine  
 Sublimest virtue and desire of fame,  
 Where justice gives the laurel; in his eye  
 The inextinguishable spark, which fires  
 The souls of patriots; while his brow supports  
 Undaunted valour, and contempt of death.  
 Serene he cast his looks around, and spake—

‘ Why this astonishment on ev'ry face,  
 Ye men of Sparta? Does the name of death

Create this fear and wonder? O my friends,  
 Why do we labour through the arduous paths  
 Which lead to virtue? Fruitless were the toil,  
 Above the reach of human feet were plac'd  
 The distant summit, if the fear of death  
 Could intercept our passage. But a frown  
 Of unavailing terror he assumes  
 To shake the firmness of a mind which knows  
 That, wanting virtue, life is pain and woe,  
 That, wanting liberty, ev'n virtue mourns,  
 And looks around for happiness in vain.  
 Then speak, O Sparta! and demand my life.  
 My heart, exulting, answers to thy call,  
 And smiles on glorious fate. To live with fame  
 The gods allow to many; but to die  
 With equal lustre is a blessing Jove  
 Among the choicest of his boons reserves,  
 Which but on few his sparing hand bestows.'

Salvation thus to Sparta he proclaim'd.  
 Joy, wrapt awhile in admiration, paus'd,  
 Suspending praise; nor praise at last resounds  
 In high acclaim to rend the arch of heav'n;  
 A reverential murmur breathes applause.  
 So were the pupils of Lyncurgus train'd  
 To bridle nature. Public fear was dumb  
 Before their senate, ephori, and kings,  
 Nor exultation into clamour broke.  
 Amidst them rose Dieneces, and thus—

'Haste to Thermopylæ. To Xerxes shew  
 The discipline of Spartans, long renown'd  
 In rigid warfare, with enduring minds,  
 Which neither pain, nor want, nor danger, bend.  
 Fly to the gate of Greece, which open stands  
 To slavery and rapine. They will shrink  
 Before your standard, and their native seats  
 Resume in abject Asia. Arm, ye sires,  
 Who with a growing race have bless'd the state:  
 That race, your parents, gen'ral Greece, forbid  
 Delay. Heav'n summons. Equal to the cause  
 A chief behold. Can Spartans ask for more?'



Bold Alpheus next. 'Command my swift return  
Amid the Isthmian council to declare  
Your instant march.' His dictates all approve.  
Back to the Isthmus he unwearied speeds.

Now from th' assembly with majestic steps  
Forth moves their godlike king, with conscious worth  
His gen'rous bosom glowing. Such the port  
Of his divine progenitor; impell'd  
By ardent virtue, so Alcides trod  
Invincible, to face in horrid war  
The triple form of Geryon, or against  
The bulk of huge Antæus match his strength.

Say, Muse, what heroes, by example fir'd,  
Nor less by honour, offer'd now to bleed?  
Dieneces the foremost, brave and staid,  
Of vet'ran skill to range in martial fields  
Well order'd lines of battle. Maron next,  
Twin-born with Alpheus, shows his manly frame.  
Him Agis follow'd, brother to the queen  
Of great Leonidas, his friend, in war  
His try'd companion. Graceful were his steps,  
And gentle his demeanour. Still his soul  
Preserv'd the purest virtue, though refin'd  
By arts unknown to Lacedæmon's race.  
High was his office. He, when Sparta's weal  
Support and counsel from the gods requir'd,  
Was sent the hallow'd messenger, to learn  
Their mystic will, in oracles declar'd,  
From rocky Delphi, from Dordona's shade,  
Or sea-encircled Delos, or the cell  
Of dark Trophonius, round Bœotia known.  
Three hundred more complete th' intrepid band;  
Illustrious fathers all of gen'rous sons,  
The future guardians of Laconia's state.  
Then rose Megistias, leading forth his son,  
Young Menalippus. Not of Spartan blood  
Were they. Megistias, heav'n-enlighten'd seer,  
Had left his native Acarnanian shore;  
Along the border of Eurotas chose  
His place of dwelling. For his worth receiv'd,  
And hospitably cherish'd, he the wreath  
Pontific bore in Lacedæmon's camp,

Serene in danger, nor his sacred arm  
From warlike toil secluding, nor untaught  
To wield the sword, and poise the weighty spear.

But to his home Leonidas retir'd.

There calm in secret thought he thus explor'd  
His mighty soul, while nature in his breast  
A short emotion rais'd. 'What sudden grief,  
What cold reluctance, now unmans my heart,  
And whispers that I fear? Can death dismay  
Leonidas; death, often seen and scorn'd,  
When clad most dreadful in the battle's front?  
Or to relinquish life in all its pride,  
With all my honours blooming round my head,  
Repines my soul; or rather to forsake,  
Eternally forsake, my weeping wife,  
My infant offspring, and my faithful friends?  
Leonidas, awake! Shall these withstand  
The public safety? Hark! thy country calls.  
O sacred voice! I hear thee. At the sound  
Reviving virtue brightens in my heart;  
Fear vanishes before her. Death, receive  
My unreluctant hand. Immortal fame,  
Thou too, attendant on my righteous fall,  
With wings unweary'd wilt protect my tomb.'

His virtuous soul the hero had confirm'd  
When Agis enter'd. 'If my tardy lips,'  
He thus began, 'have hitherto forborne  
To bring their grateful tribute of applause,  
Which, as a Spartan, to thy worth I owe,  
Forgive the brother of thy queen. Her grief  
Detain'd me from thee. O unequall'd man!  
Though Lacedæmon call thy prime regard,  
Forget not her, sole victim of distress  
Amid the general safety. To assuage  
Such pain fraternal tenderness is weak.'

The king embrac'd him, and reply'd, 'O best,  
O dearest man! conceive not but my soul  
To her is fondly bound, from whom my days  
Their largest share of happiness deriv'd.  
Can I, who yield my breath lest others mourn,  
Lest thousands should be wretched, when she pines,  
More lov'd than any, tho' less dear than all,

Can I neglect her griefs? In future days,  
 If thou with grateful memory record,  
 My name and fate, O Sparta! pass not this  
 Unheeded by. The life for thee resign'd  
 Knew not a painful hour to tire my soul,  
 Nor were they common joys I left behind.'

So spake the patriot, and his heart o'erflow'd  
 In ten'prest passion. Then in eager haste  
 The faithful partner of his bed he sought.  
 Amid her weeping children sat the queen  
 Immovable and mute. Her swimming eyes  
 Bent to the earth. Her arms were folded o'er  
 Her lab'ring bosom, blotted with her tears.  
 As, when a dusky mist involves the sky,  
 The moon through all the dreary vapours spreads  
 The radiant vesture of her silver light  
 O'er the dull face of nature; so the queen,  
 Divinely graceful, shining through her grief,  
 Brighten'd the cloud of wo. Her lord approach'd.  
 Soon, as in gentlest phrase his well-known voice  
 Awak'd her drooping spirit, for a time  
 Care was appeas'd. She lifts her languid head.  
 She gives this utterance to her tender thoughts--

' O thou, whose presence is my sole delight;  
 If thus, Leonidas, thy looks and words  
 Can check the rapid current of distress,  
 How am I mark'd for misery! How long!  
 When of life's journey less than half is pass'd,  
 And I must hear those calming sounds no more,  
 Nor see that face which makes affliction smile?

This said, returning grief o'erwhelms her breast.  
 Her orphan children, her devoted lord,  
 Pale, bleeding, breathless on the field of death,  
 Her ever-during solitude of wo,  
 All rise in mingled horror to her sight,  
 When thus in bitterest agony she spake--

' O whither art thou going from my arms?  
 Shall I no more behold thee? Oh! no more,  
 In conquest clad, o'erspread with glorious dust,  
 Wilt thou return to greet thy native soil,  
 And find thy dwelling joyful! Ah! too brave,  
 Why would'st thou hurry to the dreary gates

Of death, uncall'd? Another might have bled,  
 Like thee a victim of Alcides' race,  
 Less dear to all, and Sparta been secure.  
 Now ev'ry eye with mine is drown'd in tears.  
 All with these babes lament a father lost.  
 Alas! how heavy is our lot of pain!  
 Our sighs must last when ev'ry other breast  
 Exults in safety, purchas'd by our loss.  
 Thou didst not heed our anguish—didst not seek  
 One pause for my instruction how to bear  
 Thy endless absence, or like thee to die.'

Unutterable sorrow here confin'd  
 Her voice. These words Leonidas return'd—  
 'I see, I share thy agony. My soul  
 Ne'er knew how warm the prevalence of love,  
 How strong a parent's feelings, till this hour;  
 Nor was she once insensible to thee  
 In all her fervour to assert my fame.  
 How had the honours of my name been stain'd  
 By hesitation? Shameful life, preferr'd  
 By an inglorious colleague, would have left  
 No choice but what were infamy to shun,  
 Not virtue to accept. Then deem no more  
 That, of thy love regardless, or thy tears,  
 I rush uncall'd to death. The voice of fate,  
 The gods, my fame, my country, press my doom.  
 Oh! thou dear mourner! Wherefore swells afresh  
 That tide of wo? Leonidas must fall.  
 Alas! far heavier misery impends  
 O'er thee and these, if soften'd by thy tears,  
 I shamefully refuse to yield that breath,  
 Which justice, glory, liberty, and heav'n,  
 Claim for my country, for my sons and thee.  
 Think on my long unalter'd love. Reflect  
 On my paternal fondness. Hath my heart  
 E'er known a pause in love, or pious care?  
 Now shall that care, that tenderness be shewn  
 Most warm, most faithful. When thy husband dies  
 For Lacedæmon's safety; thou wilt share,  
 Thou and thy children, the diffusive good.  
 I am selected by th' immortal gods  
 To save a people. Should my timid heart

That sacred charge abandon, I should plunge  
Thee too in shame, in sorrow. Thou wouldst mourn  
With Lacedæmon; wouldst with her sustain  
Thy painful portion of oppression's weight.  
Behold thy sons, now worthy of their name,  
Their Spartan birth. Their growing bloom would pine  
Depress'd, dishonour'd, and their youthful hearts  
Beat at the sound of liberty no more.

On their own merit, on their father's fame,  
When he the Spartan freedom hath confirm'd,  
Before the world illustrious will they rise,  
Their country's bulwark, and their mother's joy.'

Here paus'd the patriot. In religious awe  
Grief heard the voice of virtue. No complaint  
The solemn silence broke. Tears ceas'd to flow;  
Ceas'd for a moment, soon again to stream.  
Behold, in arms before the palace drawn,  
His brave companions of the war demand  
Their leader's presence. Then her griefs, renew'd,  
Surpassing utt'rance, intercept her sighs.

Each accent freezes on her falt'ring tongue.  
In speechless anguish on the hero's breast  
She sinks. On ev'ry side his children press,  
Hang on his knees, and kiss his honour'd hand.  
His soul no longer struggles to confine  
Her agitation. Down the hero's check,  
Down flows the manly sorrow. Great in wo,  
Amid his children, who inclose him round,  
He stands, indulging tenderness and love  
In graceful tears, when thus, with lifted eyes  
Address'd to heaven, 'Thou ever-living pow'r,  
Look down propitious, sire of gods and men!  
O to this faithful woman, whose desert  
May claim thy favour, grant the hours of peace!  
And thou, my bright forefather, seed of Jove,  
O Hercules, neglect not these thy race!  
But, since that spirit I from thee derive  
Transports me from them to resistless fate,  
Be thou their guardian! Teach them, like thyself,  
By glorious labours to embellish life,  
And from their father let them learn to die!'

Here ending, forth he issues, and assumes

Before the ranks his station of command.  
They now proceed. So mov'd the host of heav'n  
On Phlegra's plains, to meet the giant sons  
Of Earth and Titan. From Olympus march'd  
The deities unbattled; while their king  
Tower'd in the front, with thunder in his grasp.  
Thence through the streets of Lacedæmon pass'd  
Leonidas. Before his footsteps bow  
The multitude, exulting. On he treads  
Rever'd. Unsated, their enraptur'd sight  
Pursues his graceful stature, and their tongues  
Extol and hail him as their guardian god.  
Firm in his nervous hand he grips the spear.  
Low as the ankles, from his shoulders hangs  
The massy shield, and o'er his burnish'd helm  
The purple plumage nods. Harmonious youths,  
Around whose brows entwining laurels play,  
In lofty-sounding strains his praise record;  
While snowy-finger'd virgins all the way  
Bestrew with od'rous garlands. Now his breast  
Is all possess'd by glory; which dispell'd  
Whate'er of grief remain'd, or vain regret  
For those he left behind. The rev'rend train  
Of Lacedæmon's senate last appear,  
To take their final, solemn leave, and grace  
Their hero's parting steps. Around him flow  
In civil pomp their venerable robes,  
Mix'd with the blaze of arms. The shining troop  
Of warriors press behind him. Maron here,  
With Menalippus, warm in flow'ry prime;  
There Agis, there Megistias, and the chief  
Dieneces. Laconia's dames ascend  
The loftiest mansions; thronging o'er the roofs,  
Applaud their sons, their husbands, as they march.  
So parted Argo from the Iolchian strand  
To plough the foaming surge. Thessalia's nymphs,  
Rang'd on the cliffs, o'ershading Neptune's face,  
Still on the distant vessel fix'd their eyes  
Admiring; still in pæans bless'd the helm,  
By Greece entrusted with her chosen sons  
For high adventures on the Colchian shore.  
Swift on his course Leonidas proceeds.

Soon is Eurotas pass'd, and Lerna's bank,  
 Where his victorious ancestor subdu'd  
 The many-headed Hydra, and the lake  
 To endless fame consign'd. Th' unweary'd bands  
 Next through the pines of Mænalus he led,  
 And down Parthenius urg'd the rapid toil.  
 Six days incessant was their march pursu'd,  
 When to their ear the hoarse-resounding waves  
 Beat on the Isthmus. Here the tents are spread.  
 Below the wide horizon then the sun  
 Had dipp'd his beamy locks. The queen of night  
 Glean'd from the centre of th' ethereal vault,  
 And o'er the raven plumes of darkness shed  
 Her placid light. Leonidas detains  
 Dieneses and Agis. Open stands  
 The tall pavilion, and admits the moon.  
 As here they sit conversing, from the hill,  
 Which rose before them, one of noble port  
 Is seen descending. Lightly down the slope  
 He treads. He calls aloud. They heard, they knew  
 The voice of Alpheus, whom the king address'd—

‘O thou, with swiftness by the gods endu'd  
 To match the ardour of thy daring soul,  
 What from the Isthmus draws thee? Do the Greeks  
 Neglect to arm and face the public foe?’

‘Good news gives wings,’ said Alpheus. ‘Greece is  
 arm'd.

The neighb'ring Isthmus holds th' Arcadian bands.  
 From Mantinea Diophrantus leads  
 Five hundred spears; nor less from Tegea's walls  
 With Hegesander move. A thousand more,  
 Who in Orchomenus reside, and range  
 Along Parrhasius or Cyllene's brow,  
 Who near the foot of Erymanthus dwell,  
 Or on Alphean banks, with various chiefs,  
 Expect thy presence. Most is Clonius fam'd,  
 Of stature huge, unshaken rock of war.  
 Four hundred warriors brave Alcmaeon draws  
 From stately Corinth's tow'rs. Two hundred march  
 From Phlius: them Eupalamus commands.  
 An equal number of Mycenæ's race

Aristobulus heads. Through fear alone  
Of thee, and threat'ning Greece, the Thebans arm.  
A few in Thebes authority and rule  
Usurp. Corrupted with barbarian gold,  
They quench the gen'rous eleutherian flame  
In ev'ry heart. The eloquent they bribe.  
By specious tales the multitude they cheat,  
Establishing base measures on the plea  
Of public safety. Others are immers'd  
In all the sloth of plenty, who, unmov'd,  
In shameful ease, behold the state betray'd.  
Aw'd by thy name, four hundred took the field.  
The wily Anaxander is their chief  
With Leontiades. To see their march  
I staid; then hasten'd to survey the straits,  
Which thou shalt render sacred to renown.

‘ For ever mingled with a crumbling soil,  
Which moulders round th’ indented Malian coast,  
The sea rolls slimy. On a solid rock,  
Which forms the inmost limit of a bay,  
Thermopylæ is stretch’d. Where broadest spread,  
It measures threescore paces, bounded here  
By the salt ooze, which underneath presents  
A dreary surface; there the lofty cliffs  
Of wooded Cæta overlook the pass,  
And far beyond, o’er half the surge below,  
Their horrid umbrage cast. Across the mouth  
An ancient bulwark of the Phocians stands,  
A wall with gates and tow’rs. The Locrian force  
Was marching forward. Them I pass’d, to greet  
Demophilus of Thespia, who had pitch’d  
Seven hundred spears before th’ important fence.  
His brother’s son attends the rev’rend chief,  
Young Dithyrambus. He for noble deeds,  
Yet more for temperance of mind, renown’d,  
In early bloom with brightest honours shines,  
Nor wantons in the blaze.’ Here Agis spake—

‘ Well hast thou painted that illustrious youth.  
He is my host at Thespia. Though adorn’d  
With various wreaths, by fame, by fortune bless’d,  
His gentle virtues take from Envy’s lips



That blasting venom; and her baneful eye  
Strives on his worth to smile.' In silence all  
Again remain, when Alphens thus proceeds—

' Plataea's chosen veterans I saw,  
Small in their number, matchless in their fame.  
Diomedon the leader. Keen his sword  
At Marathon was felt, where Asia bled.  
These guard Thermopylæ. Among the hills,  
Unknown to strangers, winds an upper strait,  
Which by a thousand Phocians is secur'd.  
Ere these brave Greeks I quitted, in the bay  
A stately chieftain of th' Athenian fleet  
Arriv'd. I join'd him. Copious in thy praise,  
He utter'd rapture, but austere blam'd  
Laconia's tardy counsels; while the ships  
Of Athens long had stemm'd Eubœan tides,  
Which flow not distant from our future post.  
This was the far-fam'd Æschylus, by Mars,  
By Phœbus lov'd. Parnassus him proclaims  
The first of Attic poets; him the plains  
Of Marathon a soldier, try'd in arms.'

' Well may Athenians murmur,' said the king.  
' Too long hath Sparta slumber'd on her shield.  
By morn beyond the Isthmus we will spread  
A gen'rous banner. In Laconian strains  
Of Alcman and Terpander lives the fame  
Of our forefathers. Let our deeds attract  
The brighter muse of Athens, in the song  
Of Æschylus divine. Now frame thy choice.  
Share in our fate: or, hast'ning home, report  
How much already thy discerning mind,  
Thy active limbs, have merited from me;  
How serv'd thy country.' From th' impatient lips  
Of Alphens swift these fervid accents broke—

' I have not measur'd such a tract of land,  
Have not, untir'd, beheld the setting sun,  
Nor through the shade of midnight urg'd my steps,  
To animate the Grecians, that myself  
Might be exempt from warlike toil, or death.  
Return? Ah! no. A second time my speed  
Shall visit thee, Thermopylæ. My limbs  
Shall at thy side, Leonidas, obtain

An honourable grave. And, oh! amid  
 His country's perils, if a Spartan breast  
 May feel a private sorrow, fierce revenge  
 I seek, not only for th' insulted state,  
 But for a brother's wrongs. A younger hope,  
 Than I and Maron, bless'd our father's years,  
 Child of his age, and Pólydorus nam'd.  
 His mind, while tender in his op'ning prime,  
 Was bent to strenuous virtue. Gen'rous scorn  
 Of pain, or danger, taught his early strength  
 To struggle patient with severest toils.  
 Oft, when inclement winter chill'd the air,  
 When frozen show'rs had swoln Enrotas' stream,  
 Amid th' impetuous channel would he plunge,  
 To breast the torrent. On a fatal day,  
 As in the sea his active limbs he bath'd,  
 A savage corsair of the Persian king,  
 My brother, naked and defenceless, bore,  
 Ev'n in my sight, to Asia; there to waste,  
 With all the promise of its growing worth,  
 His youth in bondage. Tedious were the tale,  
 Should I recount my pains, my father's woes,  
 The days he wept, the sleepless nights he beat  
 His aged bosom. And shall Alpheus' spear  
 Be absent from Thermopylæ, nor claim,  
 O Polydorus, vengeance for thy wrongs  
 In that first slaughter of the barb'rous foe?

Here interpos'd Dieneeces. Their hands  
 He grasp'd, and cordial transport thus express'd—

‘ O that Lycurgus from the shades might rise  
 To praise the virtue which his laws inspire!’

Thus, till the dead of night, these heroes pass'd  
 The hours in friendly converse, and enjoy'd  
 Each other's virtue. Happiest of men!  
 At length, with gentle heaviness, the pow'r  
 Of sleep invades their eyelids, and constrains  
 Their magnanimity and zeal to rest;  
 When, sliding down the hemisphere, the moon  
 Immers'd in midnight shade her silver head.

# LEONIDAS.

*BOOK II.*

## The Argument.

*Leonidas, on his approach to the Isthmus, is met by the leaders of the troops sent from other Grecian states, and by the deputies who composed the Isthmian council. He harangues them; then proceeds, in conjunction with these forces, towards Thermopylæ. On the first day he is joined by Dithyrambus; on the third he reaches a valley in Locris, where he is entertained by Oileus, the public host of the Lacedæmonian state; and the next morning is accompanied by him in a car to the temple of Pan: he finds Medon there, the son of Oileus, and commander of two thousand Locrians, already posted at Thermopylæ, and by him is informed that the army of Xerxes is in sight of the pass.*

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK II.

AURORA spreads her purple beams around,  
When move the Spartans. Their approach is known.  
The Isthmian council, and the diff'rent chiefs  
Who lead th' auxiliar bands, advance to meet  
Leonidas; Eupatannus the strong,  
Alcmaeon, Clonius, Diophantus brave,  
With Hegesander. At their head is seen  
Aristobulus, whom Mycenæ's ranks  
Obey; Mycenæ, once august in pow'r,  
In splendid wealth, and vaunting still the name  
Of Agamemnon. To Laconia's king  
The chieftain spake—'Leonidas, survey  
Mycenæ's race. Should ev'ry other Greek  
Be aw'd by Xerxes, and his eastern host,  
Believe not we can fear, deriv'd from those  
Who once conducted o'er the foaming surge  
The strength of Greece; who desert left the fields  
Of ravag'd Asia, and her proudest walls  
From their foundations levell'd to the ground.'

Leonidas replies not, but his voice  
Directs to all—'Illustrious warriors, hail!  
Who thus undaunted signalize your faith,  
Your gen'rous ardour, in the common cause.  
But you, whose counsels prop the Grecian state,  
O venerable synod, who consign  
To our protecting sword the gate of Greece,  
Thrice hail! Whate'er by valour we obtain,  
Your wisdom must preserve. With piercing eyes  
Contemplate ev'ry city, and discern  
Their various tempers. Some, with partial care,  
To guard their own, neglect the public, weal.  
Unmov'd and cold are others. Terror here,  
Corruption there, presides. O fire the brave

To gen'ral efforts in the gen'ral cause.  
 Confirm the wav'ring. Animate the cold,  
 The timid. Watch the faithless. Some betray  
 Themselves and Greece. Their perfidy prevent,  
 Or call them back to honour. Let us all  
 Be link'd in sacred union, and this land  
 May face the world's whole multitude in arms.  
 If for the spoil by Paris borne to Troy,  
 A thousand keels the Hellespont o'erspread,  
 Shall not again confederated Greece  
 Be rous'd to battle, and to freedom give  
 What once she gave to fame? Behold, we haste  
 To stop th' invading tyrant. Till we fall,  
 He shall not pour his myriads on your plains.  
 But, as the gods conceal how long our strength  
 May stand unvanquish'd, or how soon may yield,  
 Waste not a moment, till consenting Greece  
 Range all her free-born numbers in the field.'

Leonidas concluded. Awful step  
 Before the sage assembly one, supreme  
 And old in office, who address'd the king—

' Thy bright example ev'ry heart unites.  
 From thee her happiest omens Greece derives  
 Of concord, safety, liberty, and fame.  
 Go then, O first of mortals, go, impress  
 Amaze and terror on the barb'rous host ;  
 The free-born Greeks instructing life to deem  
 Less dear than honour, and their country's cause.'

This heard, Leonidas, thy secret soul,  
 Exulting, tasted of the sweet reward  
 Due to thy name through endless time. Once more  
 His eyes he turn'd, and view'd in rapt'rous thought  
 His native land, which he alone can save ;  
 Then summon'd all his majesty, and o'er  
 The Isthmus trod. The phalanx moves behind  
 In deep arrangement. So th' imperial ship,  
 With stately bulk, along the heaving tide,  
 In military pomp, conducts the pow'r  
 Of some proud navy, bounding from the port,  
 To bear the vengeance of a mighty state  
 Against a tyrant's walls. Till sultry noon  
 They march ; when, halting as they take repast,

Across the plain before them they descry  
 A troop of Thespians. One above the rest  
 In eminence precedes. His glitt'ring shield,  
 Whose gold-emblazon'd orb collects the beams  
 Cast by meridian Phœbus from his throne,  
 Flames like another sun. A snowy plume,  
 With wanton curls disporting in the breeze,  
 Floats o'er his dazzling casque. On nearer view,  
 Beneath the radiant honours of his crest,  
 A countenance of youth, in rosy prime  
 And manly sweetness, won the fix'd regard  
 Of each beholder. With a modest grace  
 He came, respectful, tow'rd the king, and shew'd  
 That all ideas of his own desert  
 Were sunk in veneration. So the god  
 Of light salutes his empyreal sire;  
 When from his altar, in th' embow'ring grove  
 Of palmy Delos, or the hallow'd bound  
 Of Tenedos, or Claros, where he hears  
 In hymns his praises from the sons of men,  
 He reascends the high Olympian seats:  
 Such reverential homage on his brow,  
 O'er shading, softens his effulgent bloom  
 With loveliness and grace. The king receives  
 Th' illustrious Thespian thus—' My willing tongue  
 Would style thee Dithyrambus. Thou dost bear  
 All in thy aspect to become that name,  
 Renown'd for worth and valour. O reveal  
 Thy birth, thy charge. Whoe'er thou art, my soul  
 Desires to know thee, and would call thee friend.'

To him the youth—' O bulwark of our weal,  
 My name is Dithyrambus; which the lips  
 Of some benevolent, some gen'rous, friend  
 To thee have sounded in a partial strain,  
 And thou hast heard with favour. In thy sight  
 I stand, deputed by the Thespian chief,  
 The Theban, Locrian, by the fam'd in war,  
 Diomedon, to hasten thy approach.  
 Three days will bring the hostile pow'rs in view.'

He said. The ready standards are uprear'd.  
 By zeal enforc'd, till ev'ning shadows fall  
 The march continues; then by day-spring sweeps

The earliest dews. The van, by Agis led,  
 Displays the grisly face of battle, rough  
 With spears, obliquely trail'd in dreadful length  
 Along th' indented way. Beside him march'd  
 His gallant Thespian host. The centre boasts  
 Leonidas, the leader, who retains  
 The good Megistias near him. In the rear  
 Dienece commanded, who in charge  
 Kept Menalippus, offspring of his friend,  
 For these instructions—' Let thine eye, young man,  
 Dwell on the order of our varying march;  
 As champaign, valley, mountain, or defile,  
 Require a change. The eastern tyrant thus  
 Conducts not his Barbarians, like the sands  
 In number. Yet the discipline of Greece  
 They will encounter, feeble as the sands  
 Dash'd on a rock, and scatter'd in their fall.'

To him th' inquiring youth—' The martial tread  
 The flute's slow warble, both in just accord,  
 Entrance my senses; but let wonder ask,  
 Why is that tender vehicle of sound  
 Preferr'd in war by Sparta? Other Greeks  
 To more sonorous music rush in fight.'

' Son of my friend,' Dienece rejoins,  
 ' Well dost thou note. I praise thee. Sparta's law  
 With human passions, source of human woes,  
 Maintains perpetual strife. She sternly curbs  
 Our infant hearts, till passion yields its seat  
 To principle and order. Music too,  
 By Spartans lov'd, is temper'd by the law;  
 Still to her plan subservient, melts in notes  
 Which cool and sooth, not irritate and warm.  
 Thus by habitual abstinence apply'd  
 To ev'ry sense, suppressing nature's fire  
 By modes of duty, not by ardour, sway'd,  
 O'er each impetuous enemy abroad,  
 At home o'er vice and pleasure we prevail.'

' O might I merit a Laconian name?  
 The Acarnanian answer'd—' But explain  
 What is the land we traverse? what the hill,  
 Whose parted summit in a spacious void  
 Admits a bed of clouds? and, gracious, tell



Whose are those suits of armour which I see  
 Borne by two Helots? At the questions pleas'd,  
 Dienece continues—' Those belong  
 To Alpheus and his brother. Light of foot,  
 They, disencumber'd, all at large precede  
 This pond'rous band. They guide a troop of slaves,  
 Our missile-weapon'd Helots, to observe,  
 Provide, forewarn, and obstacles remove.  
 This tract is Phocis. That divided hill  
 Is fam'd Parnassus. Thence the voice divine  
 Was sent by Phœbus, summoning to death  
 The king of Sparta. From his fruitful blood  
 A crop will spring of victory to Greece.'

' And these three hundred, high in birth and rank,  
 All citizens of Sparta'—cries the youth.

' They all must bleed,' Dienece subjoins,

' All, with their leader: so the law decrees.'

To him, with earnest looks, the gen'rous youth—

' Wilt thou not place me in that glorious hour

Close to thy buckler? Gratitude will brace

Thy pupil's arm to manifest the force

Of thy instruction.'—' Menalippus, no,'

Return'd the chief; ' not thou of Spartan breed,

Nor call'd to perish. Thou, unwedded too,

Wouldst leave no race behind thee. Live to praise,

Live to enjoy, our solitary fall.

Reply is needless. See, the sun descends.

The army halts. I trust thee with a charge,

Son of Megistias. In my name command

Th' attendant Helots to erect our camp.

We pitch our tents in Locris.' Quick the youth

His charge accomplish'd. From a gen'rous meal,

Where, at the call of Alpheus, Locris show'd

Her Amalthean plenty on her friends,

The sated warriors soon in slumber lose

The memory of toil. His watchful round

Dienece, with Menalippus, takes.

The moon rode high and clear. Her light benign

To their pleas'd eyes a rural dwelling shew'd,

All unadorn'd, but seemly. Either side

Was fenc'd by trees high shadowing. The front

Look'd on a crystal pool, by feather'd tribes

At ev'ry dawn frequented. From the springs  
 A small redundance fed a shallow brook,  
 O'er smoothest pebbles rippling, just to wake,  
 Not startle, silence, and the ear of night  
 Entice to listen undisturb'd. Around  
 The grass was cover'd by reposing sheep,  
 Whose drowsy guard no longer bay'd the moon.

The warriors stopp'd, contemplating the seat  
 Of rural quiet. Suddenly a swain  
 Steps forth. His fingers touch the breathing reed.  
 Uprise the fleecy train. Each faithful dog  
 Is rous'd. All heedful of the wonted sound,  
 Their known conductor follow. Slow behind  
 Th' observing warriors move. Ere long they reach  
 A broad and verdant circle, thick inclos'd  
 With birches straight and tall, whose glossy rind  
 Is clad in silver from Diana's car.  
 The ground was holy, and the central spot  
 An altar bore to Pan. Beyond the orb  
 Of skreening trees, th' external circuit swarm'd  
 With sheep and bees, each neighbouring hamlet's  
 wealth

Collected. Thither soon the swain arriv'd,  
 Whom, by the name of Melibœus hail'd,  
 A peasant throng surrounded. As their chief,  
 He, nigh the altar, to his rural friends  
 Address'd these words. 'O, sent from diff'rent lords  
 With contribution to the public wants,  
 Time presses. God of peasants, bless our course!  
 Speed to the slow-pac'd ox for once impart;  
 That o'er these vallies, cool'd by dewy night,  
 We, to our summons true, ere noontide blaze,  
 May join Oileus, and his praise obtain!'

He ceas'd. To rustic madrigals and pipes,  
 Combin'd with bleating notes and tinkling bells,  
 With clamour shrill from busy tongues of dogs,  
 Or hollow-sounding from the deep-mouth'd ox,  
 Along the valley, herd and flock are driv'n  
 Successive; halting oft to harmless spoil  
 Of flow'rs and herbage, springing in their sight.  
 While Melibœus marshall'd with address  
 The inoffensive host, unseen in shades,

Dieneces applauded, and the youth  
Of Menalippus caution'd. ' Let no word  
Impede the careful peasant. On his charge  
Depends our welfare. Diligent and staid,  
He suits his godlike master. Thou wilt see  
That righteous hero soon. Now sleep demands  
Our debt to nature.' On a carpet dry  
Of moss, beneath a wholesome beech, they lay,  
Arm'd as they were. Their slumber, short, retires  
With night's last shadow. At their warning rous'd,  
The troops proceed. Th' admiring eye of youth  
In Menalippus caught the morning rays,  
To guide its travel o'er the landscape wide  
Of cultivated hillocks, dales, and lawns;  
Where mansions, hamlets, interpos'd; where domes  
Rose to their gods, through consecrated shades.  
He then exclaims—' O say, can Jove devote  
These fields to ravage, those abodes to flames?'

The Spartan answers—' Ravage, sword, and fire,  
Must be endur'd, as incidental ills.  
Suffice it these invaders, soon or late,  
Will leave this soil more fertile by their blood,  
With spoils abundant to rebuild the fanes.  
Precarious benefits are these, thou seest,  
So fram'd by heav'n; but virtue is a good  
No foe can spoil, and lasting to the grave.'

Beside the public way, an oval fount  
Of marble sparkled with a silver spray  
Of falling rills, collected from above.  
The army halted, and their hollow casques  
Dipp'd in the limpid stream. Behind it rose  
An edifice, compos'd of native roots,  
And oaken trunks, of knotted girth unwrought.  
Within were beds of moss. Old, batter'd, arms  
Hung from the roof. The curious chiefs approach.  
These words, engraven on a tablet rude,  
Megistias reads; the rest in silence hear.  
' Yon marble fountain, by Oileus plac'd,  
To thirsty lips in living water flows;  
For weary steps he fram'd this cool retreat;  
A grateful off'ring here to rural peace,

His dinted shield, his helmet, he resign'd.  
O passenger, if, born to noble deeds,  
Thou wouldst obtain perpetual grace from Jove,  
Devote thy vigour to heroic toils,  
And thy decline to hospitable cares.  
Rest here ; then seek Oilcus in his vale.'

' O Jove,' burst forth Leonidas, ' thy grace  
Is large and various. Length of days and bliss  
To him thou giv'st, to me a shorten'd term,  
Nor yet less happy. Grateful, we confess  
Thy diff'rent bounties, measur'd full to both.  
Come, let us seek Oilcus in his vale.'

The word is given. The heavy phalanx moves.  
The light-pac'd Helots long, ere morning dawn'd,  
Had recommenc'd their progress. They o'ertook  
Blithe Melibœus in a spacious vale,  
The fruitfullest in Locris, ere the sun  
Shot forth his noontide beams. On either side  
A surface scarce perceptibly ascends.  
Luxuriant vegetation crowds the soil  
With trees close rang'd and mingling. Rich the loads  
Of native fruitage to the sight reveal  
Their vig'rous nurture. There the flushing peach,  
The apple, citron, almond, pear, and date,  
Pomegranates, purple mulberry, and fig,  
From interlacing branches mix their hues  
And scents, the passenger's delight ; but leave  
In the mid vale a pasture long and large,  
Exuberant in vivid verdure cropp'd  
By herds, by flocks, innun'rous. Neighbouring knolls  
Are speckled o'er with cots, whose humble roofs  
To herdsmen, shepherds, and laborious hinds,  
Once yielded rest unbroken, till the name  
Of Xerxes shook their quiet. Yet this day  
Was festive. Swains and damsels, youth and age,  
From toil, from home enlarg'd, disporting, fill'd  
Th' enliven'd meadow. Under ev'ry shade  
A hoary minstrel sat ; the maidens danc'd ;  
Flocks bleated ; oxen low'd ; the horses neigh'd ;  
With joy the vale resounded ; terror fled ;  
Leonidas was nigh. The welcome news

By Melibœus, hast'ning to his lord,  
Was loudly told. The Helots too appear'd.  
While with his brother Alpheus thus discours'd—

‘ In this fair valley old Oileus dwells,  
The first of Locrians, of Laconia's state  
The public host. Yon large pavilions mark.  
They promise welcome. Thither let us bend,  
There tell our charge.’ This said, they both advance.  
A hoary band receives them. One, who seem'd  
In rank, in age, superior, wav'd his hand  
To Melibœus, standing near, and spake—

‘ By this my faithful messenger I learn  
That you are friends. Nor yet th' invader's foot  
Hath pass'd our confines. Else, o'ercast by time,  
My sight would scarce distinguish friend or foe,  
A Grecian or Barbarian.’ Alpheus then—

‘ We come from Lacedæmon, of our king,  
Leonidas, forerunners.’—‘ Is he nigh?  
The cordial senior tenderly exclaims—  
‘ I am Oileus. Him a beardless boy.  
I knew in Lacedæmon. Twenty years  
Are since elaps'd. He scarce remembers me.  
But I will feast him, as becomes my zeal,  
Him and his army. You, my friends, repose.’

They sit. He still discourses—‘ Spartan guests,  
In me an aged soldier you behold.  
From Ajax, fam'd in Agamemnon's war,  
Oilean Ajax, flows my vital stream,  
Unmix'd with his presumption. I have borne  
The highest functions in the Locrian state,  
Not with dishonour. Self-dismiss'd, my age  
Hath in this valley, on my own demesne,  
Liv'd tranquil, not recluse. My comrades these,  
Old magistrates and warriors, like myself,  
Releas'd from public care, with me retir'd  
To rural quiet. Through our last remains  
Of time in sweet garrulity we slide,  
Recounting past achievements of our prime;  
Nor wanting lib'ral means for lib'ral deeds;  
Here blest, here blessing, we reside. These flocks,  
These herds and pastures, these our num'rous hiuds,  
And poverty hence exil'd, may divulge

Our generous abundance. We can spread  
 A banquet for an army. By the state  
 Once more entreated, we accept a charge,  
 To age well suited. By our watchful care  
 The goddess Plenty in your tents shall dwell.'

He scarce had finish'd when the ensigns broad  
 Of Lacedæmon's phalanx down the vale  
 Were seen to wave, unfolding at the sound  
 Of flutes, soft warbling in the expressive mood  
 Of Dorian sweetness, unadorn'd. Around,  
 In notes of welcome, ev'ry shepherd tun'd  
 His sprightly reed. The damsels shew'd their hair,  
 Diversify'd with flowrets. Garlands gay,  
 Rush-woven baskets, glowing with the dyes  
 Of amaranths, of jasmîn, roses, pinks,  
 And violets, they carry, tripping light  
 Before the steps of grimly-featur'd Mars,  
 To blend the smiles of Flora with his frown.  
 Leonidas they chant in sylvan lays,  
 Him the defender of their meads and groves,  
 Him, more than Pan, a guardian to their flocks.  
 While Philomela, in her poplar shade,  
 Awaken'd, strains her emulating throat,  
 And joins, with liquid trills, the swelling sounds.

Behold Oilens and his ancient train  
 Accost Laconia's king, whose looks and words  
 Confess remembrance of the Locrian chief.

'Thrice hail, Oilens, Sparta's noble host!  
 Thou art of old acquainted with her sons,  
 Their laws, their manners. Musical as brave,  
 Train'd to delight, in smooth Terpander's lay,  
 In Alcman's Dorian measure, we enjoy,  
 In thy melodious vale, th' unlabour'd strains  
 Of rural pipes, to nightingales attun'd.  
 Our heart-felt gladness deems the golden age  
 Subsisting where thou govern'st. Still these tones  
 Of joy continu'd may thy dwellings hear!  
 Still may this plenty, unmolested, crown  
 The favour'd district! may thy reverend dust  
 Have peaceful shelter in thy father's tomb!  
 Kind Heav'n, that merit to my sword impart.'

By joy uplifted, forth Oilens broke—

'Thou dost recall me then! O, sent to guard  
 These fruits from spoil, these hoary locks from shame,  
 Permit thy weary'd soldiers to partake  
 Of Locrian plenty. Enter thou my tents,  
 Thou and thy captains. I salute them all.'

The hero, full dignity and years,  
 Once bold in action, placed now in ease,  
 Ev'n by his look, benignly cast around,  
 Gives lassitude relief. With native grace,  
 With heart-effus'd complacency, the king  
 Accepts the lib'ral welcome; while his troops,  
 To relaxation and repast dismiss'd,  
 Fitch on the wounded green their bristling spears.

Still is the ev'ning. Under chesnut shades,  
 With interweaving poplars, spacious stands  
 A well-fram'd tent. There calm the heroes sit,  
 The genial board enjoy, and feast the mind  
 On sage discourse; which thus Oilens clos'd—

'Behold, night lifts her signal, to invoke  
 That friendly god who owns the drowsy wand.  
 To Mercury this last libation flows.  
 Farewell till morn.' They separate, they sleep;  
 All but Oilens, who forsakes the tent.  
 On Melibœus in these words he calls—

'Approach, my faithful friend.' To him the swain—  
 'Thy bondman hears thy call.' The chief replies  
 Loud, for the gath'ring peasantry to heed—

'Come, Melibœus, it is surely time  
 That my repeated gift, the name of friend,  
 Thou shouldst accept. The name of bondman wounds  
 My ear. Be free. No longer, best of men,  
 Reject that boon; nor let my feeble head,  
 To thee a debtor, as to gracious heav'n,  
 Descend, and sleep unthankful in the grave.  
 Though yielding nature daily feels decay,  
 Thou dost prevent all care. The gods estrange  
 Pain from my pillow, have secur'd my breast  
 From weeds, too oft in aged soils profuse,  
 From self-tormenting petulance and pride,  
 From jealousy and envy at the fame  
 Of younger men. Leonidas will dim  
 My former lustre, as that silver orb

Outshines the meanest star; and I rejoice.  
 O Melibœus, these elect of Jove  
 To certain death advance. Immortal pow'rs!  
 How social, how endearing is their speech!  
 How flow in lib'ral cheerfulness their hearts!  
 To such a period verging, men like these  
 Age well may envy, and that envy take  
 The genuine shape of virtue. Let their span  
 Of earthly being, while it lasts, contain  
 Each earthly joy. Till blest Elysium spread  
 Her ever-blooming, inexhausted stores  
 To their glad sight, be mine the grateful task  
 To drain my plenty. From the vaulted caves  
 Our vessels large of well-fermented wine,  
 From all our gran'ries lift the treasur'd corn.  
 Go, load the groaning axles, nor forget  
 With garments new to greet Melissa's nymphs.  
 To her a triple change of vestments bear,  
 With twenty lambs and twenty speckled kids.  
 Be it your care, my peasants, some to aid  
 Him, your director, others to select  
 Five hundred oxen, thrice a thousand sheep,  
 Of lusty swains a thousand. Let the morn,  
 When first she blushes, see my will perform'd.  
 They heard. Their lord's injunctions to fulfil  
 Was their ambition. He, unresting, mounts  
 A ready-car. The coursers had enroll'd  
 His name in Isthmian and Nemean games.  
 By moon-light, floating on the splendid reins,  
 He, o'er the busy vale intent, is borne  
 From place to place; o'erlooks, directs, forgets  
 That he is old. Meantime the shades of night,  
 Retiring, wake Dienece. He gives  
 The word. His pupil seconds. Ev'ry band  
 Is arm'd. Day opens. Sparta's king appears.  
 Oileus greets him. In his radiant car  
 The senior stays, reluctant; but his guest  
 So wills, in Spartan reverence to age.  
 Then spake the Locrian—'To assist thy camp  
 A chosen band of peasants I detach.  
 I trust thy valour. Doubt not thou my care;  
 Nor doubt that swain.' Oileus, speaking, look'd



On Melibœus. 'Skilful he commands  
 These hinds. Him wise, him faithful, I have prov'd,  
 More than Emmæus to Laertes' son.  
 To him th' Oetæan woods, their devious tracks,  
 Are known, each rill and fountain. Near the pass  
 Two thousand Locrians wilt thou find encamp'd,  
 My eldest born their leader, Medon nam'd,  
 Well exercis'd in arms. My daughter dwells  
 On Oeta. Sage Melissa she is call'd,  
 Enlighten'd priestess of the tuneful nine.  
 She haply may accost thee. Thou wilt lend  
 An ear. Not fruitless are Melissa's words.  
 Now, servants, bring the sacred wine.' Obey'd,  
 He, from his seat uprising, thus proceeds—

'Lo! from this chalice a libation pure  
 To Mars, to Grecian liberty and laws,  
 To their protector, Eleutherian Jove,  
 To his nine daughters, who record the brave,  
 To thy renown, Leonidas, I pour;  
 And take an old man's benediction too.'

He stopt. Affection, struggling in his heart,  
 Eurst forth again—'Illustrious guest, afford  
 Another hour! That slender space of time  
 Yield to my sole possession. While the troops,  
 Already glitt'ring down the dewy vale,  
 File through its narrow'd outlet, near my side  
 Deign to be carry'd, and my talk endure.'

The king, well pleas'd, ascends. Slow move the  
 steeds

Behind the rear. Oilæus grasps his hand,  
 Then, in the fulness of his soul, pursues—

'Thy veneration for Laconia's laws  
 That I may strengthen, may to rapture warm,  
 Hear me display the melancholy fruits  
 Of lawless will. When o'er the Lydian plains  
 Th' innumerable tents of Xerxes spread,  
 His vassal, Pythius, who in affluent means  
 Surpasses me, as that Barbarian prince  
 Thou dost in virtue, entertain'd the host,  
 And proffer'd all his treasures. These the king  
 Refusing, ev'n augmented from his own.  
 An act of fancy, not habitual grace,

A sparkling vapour through the regal gloom  
Of cruelty and pride. He now prepar'd  
To march from Sardis, when with humble tears  
The good old man besought him—' Let the king,  
Propitious, hear a parent! In thy train  
I have five sons. Ah! leave my eldest born,  
Thy future vassal, to sustain my age!  
The tyrant fell reply'd—' Presumptuous man,  
Who art my slave, in this tremendous war  
Is not my person hazarded, my race,  
My consort? Former merit saves from death  
Four of thy offspring. Him so dearly priz'd,  
Thy folly hath destroy'd.' His body straight  
Was hewn asunder. By the public way  
On either side a bleeding half was cast,  
And millions pass'd between. O Spartan king,  
Taught to revere the sanctity of laws,  
The acts of Xerxes with thy own compare,  
His fame with thine. The curses of mankind  
Give him renown. He marches to destroy,  
But thou to save. Behold the trees are bent,  
Each eminence is loaded thick with crowds,  
From cots, from ev'ry hamlet pour'd abroad,  
To bless thy steps, to celebrate thy praise.'

Ofttimes the king his decent brow inclin'd,  
Mute and obsequious to an elder's voice,  
Which through th' instructed ear unceasing flow'd,  
In eloquence and knowledge. Scarce an hour  
Was fled. The narrow dale was left behind.  
A causeway broad disclos'd an ancient pile  
Of military fame. A trophy large,  
Compact with crested morions, targets rude,  
With spears and corselets, dimm'd by eating age,  
Stood near a lake pellucid, smooth, profound,  
Of circular expanse; whose bosom shew'd  
A green-slop'd island, figur'd o'er with flow'rs,  
And from its centre lifting high to view  
A marble chapel, on the massy strength  
Of Doric columns rais'd. A full-wrought frieze  
Display'd the sculptor's art. In solemn pomp  
Of obelisks, and busts, and story'd urns,  
Sepulchral mansions of illustrious dead

Were scatter'd round, o'ercast with shadows black  
Of yew and cypress. In a serious note  
Oileus, pointing, opens new discourse—

‘ Beneath yon turf my ancestors repose.  
Oilean Ajax singly was depriv'd  
Of fun'ral honours there. With impious lust  
He stain'd Minerva's temple. From the gulph  
Of briny waters by their god preserv'd,  
That god he brav'd. He lies beneath a rock,  
By Neptune's trident in his wrath o'erturn'd.  
Shut from Elysium for a hundred years,  
The hero's ghost bewail'd his oozy tomb.  
A race more pious on th' Oilean house  
Felicity have drawn. To ev'ry god  
I owe my bliss, my early fame to Pan.  
Once, on the margin of that silent pool,  
In their nocturnal camp, Barbarians lay,  
Awaiting morn to violate the dead.  
My youth was fir'd. I summon'd, from their cots,  
A rustic host. We sacrific'd to Pan,  
Assail'd th' unguarded ruffians in his name.  
He with his terrors smote their yielding hearts.  
Not one surviv'd the fury of our swains.  
Rich was the pillage. Hence that trophy rose,  
Of costly blocks constructed; hence that fane,  
Inscrib'd to Pan, th' armipotent. O king,  
Be to an old man's vanity benign.  
This frowning emblem of terrific war  
Proclaims the ardour and exploits of youth.  
This, to Barbarian strangers ent'ring Greece,  
Shews what I was. The marble fount thou saw'st  
Of living water, whose transparent flow  
Reliev'd thy march in yester sultry sun,  
The cell, which offer'd rest on beds of moss,  
Shew what I am; to Grecian neighbours shew  
The hospitality of age. O age,  
Where are thy graces, but in lib'ral deeds,  
In bland deportment? Would thy furrow'd cheeks  
Lose the deformity of time? Let siniles  
Dwell in thy wrinkles. Then, rever'd by youth,  
Thy feeble steps will find'.....Abruptly here  
He paus'd. A manly warrior, full in sight,

Beside the trophy on his target lean'd,  
Unknown to Sparta's leader, who address'd  
His rev'rend host—'Thou pausest. Let me ask,  
Whom do I see, resembling in his form  
A demigod?' In transport then the sage—

'It is my son, discover'd by his shield,  
Thy brave auxiliar, Medon! He sustains  
My ancient honours in his native state,  
Which kindly chose my offspring to replace  
Their long-sequester'd chief. Heart-winning guest!  
My life, a tide of joy, which never knew  
A painful ebb, beyond its wonted mark  
Flows in thy converse. Could a wish prevail,  
My long and happy course should finish here.'

The chariot rested. Medon now approach'd,  
Saluting thus Leonidas—'O king  
Of warlike Sparta, Xerxes' host in sight  
Begin to spread their multitude, and fill  
The spacious Malian plain.' The king replies—

'Accept, illustrious messenger, my thanks.  
With such a brave assistant as the son  
Of great Oilens, more assur'd I go  
'To face those numbers.' With his godlike friend  
The father, now dismounting from his car,  
Embraces Medon. In a sliding bark  
They all are wafted to the island fane  
Erected by Oilens, and enrich'd  
With his engrav'd achievements. Thence the eye  
Of Sparta's gen'ral, in extensive scope,  
Contemplates each battalion as they wind  
Along the pool, whose limpid face reflects  
Their weapons, glist'ning in the early sun.  
Them he to Pan armipotent commends,  
His favour thus invoking—'God, whose pow'r,  
By rumour vain, or echo's empty voice,  
Can sink the valiant in desponding fear,  
Can disarray whole armies, smile on these  
Thy worshippers! thy own Arcadians guard!  
Through thee Oilens triumph'd. On his son,  
On me, look down. Our shields auxiliar join  
Against profane Barbarians, who insult  
The Grecian gods, and meditate the fall

Of this thy shrine.' He said, and now, intent  
To leave the island, on Oilens call'd.

'He,' Medon answer'd, 'by his joy and zeal  
Too high transported, and discoursing long,  
Felt on his drowsy lids a balmy down  
Of heaviness descending. He, unmark'd  
Amid thy pious commerce with the god,  
Was silently remov'd. The good old chief  
On carpets, rais'd by tender, menial hands,  
Calm in the secret sanctuary is laid.'

His hast'ning step Leonidas restrains;  
Thus fervent prays....' O Maia's son, best pleas'd  
When calling slumber to a virtuous eye,  
Watch o'er my venerable friend! Thy balm  
He wants, exhausted by his love to me.  
Sweet sleep, thou soft'nest that intruding pang  
Which gen'rous breasts, so parting, must admit.'

He said, embark'd, relanded. To his side  
Inviting Medon, he rejoin'd the host.



# LEONIDAS.

*BOOK III.*

## The Argument.

*Leonidas arrives at Thermopylæ about noon, on the fourth day after his departure from the Isthmus. He is received by Demophilus, the commander of Thespia, and by Anaxunder the Theban, treacherously recommending Epialtes, a Malian, who seeks, by a pompous description of the Persian power, to intimidate the Grecian leaders as they are viewing the enemy's camp from the top of mount Oeta. He is answered by Dieneccs and Diomedon. Xerxes sends Tigranes and Phraortes to the Grecian camp, who are dismissed by Leonidas, and conducted back by Dithyrambus and Diomedon; which last, incensed at the arrogance of Tigranes, treats him with contempt and menaces. This occasions a challenge to single combat between Diomedon and Tigranes, Dithyrambus and Phraortes. Epialtes, after a conference with Anaxander, declares his intention of returning to Xerxes. Leonidas dispatches Agis with Melibæus, a faithful slave of Oileus, and high in the estimation of his lord, to view a body of Phocians, who had been posted at a distance from Thermopylæ, for the defence of another pass in mount Oeta.*



# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK III.

NOW in the van Leonidas appears,  
With Medon still conferring. ‘Hast thou heard,’  
He said, ‘among th’ innumerable foes  
What chiefs are most distinguish’d?’ ‘Might we trust  
To fame,’ reply’d the Locrian, ‘Xerxes boasts  
His ablest, bravest, counsellor and chief,  
In Artemisia, Caria’s matchless queen.  
To old Darius benefits had bound  
Her lord, herself to Xerxes. Not compell’d,  
Except by magnanimity, she leads  
The best appointed squadron of his fleet.  
No female softness Artemisia knows,  
But in maternal love. Her widow’d hand  
With equity and firmness for her son  
Administers the sway. Of Doric race  
She still retains the spirit, which from Greece  
Her ancestors transplanted. Other chiefs  
Are all Barbarians, little known to fame,  
Save one, whom Sparta hath herself supply’d,  
Not less than Demaratus, once her king,  
An exile now.’ Leonidas rejoins....

‘Son of Oileus, like thy father wise,  
Like him partake my confidence. Thy words  
Recall an era, sadd’ning all my thoughts.  
That injur’d Spartan shar’d the regal sway  
With one.... Alas! my brother, eldest born,  
Unbless’d by nature, favour’d by no god,  
Cleomenes! Insanity of mind,  
Malignant passions, impious acts, deform’d  
A life concluded by his own fell hand.  
Against his colleague, envions, he suborn’d  
Lentychides. Him perjury and fraud

Plac'd on the seat, by Demaratus held  
Unstain'd in lustre.' Here Oïleus' son....

' My future service only can repay  
Thy confidential friendship. Let us close  
The gloomy theme. Thermopylæ is nigh.'  
Each face in transport glows. Now Oeta rear'd  
His tow'ring forehead. With impatient steps  
On rush'd the phalaux, sounding pæans high;  
As if the present deity of fame  
Had from the summit shewn her dazzling form,  
With wreaths unfading on her temples bound,  
Her adamantine trumpet in her hand,  
To celebrate their valour. From the van  
Leonidas advances, like the sun,  
When through dividing clouds his presence stays  
Their sweeping rack, and stills the clam'rous wind.  
The army silent halt. Their ensigns fan  
The air no longer. Motionless their spears.  
His eye reveals the ardour of his soul,  
Which thus finds utt'rance from his eager lips....

' All hail, Thermopylæ, and you, the pow'rs  
Presiding here! All hail, ye silvan gods,  
Ye fountain nymphs, who send your lucid rills  
In broken murmurs down the rugged steep!  
Receive us, O benignant, and support  
The cause of Greece! Conceal the secret paths  
Which o'er these crags, and through these forests, wind,  
Untrod by human feet, and trac'd alone  
By your immortal footsteps! O defend  
Your own recesses, nor let impious war  
Profane the solemn silence of your groves!  
Then on your hills your praises shall you hear  
From those, whose deeds shall tell th' approving world  
That not to undeservers did ye grant  
Your high protection. You, my valiant friends,  
Now rouse the gen'rous spirit which inflames  
Your hearts; exert the vigour of your arms;  
That in the bosoms of the brave and free  
Your memorable actions may survive;  
May sound delightful in the ear of time,  
Long as blue Neptune beats the Malian strand,

Or those tall cliffs erect their shaggy tops  
So near to Heav'n, your monuments of fame!"

As in some torrid region, where the head  
Of Ceres bends beneath her golden load,  
If from a burning brand a scatter'd spark  
Invade the parching ground, a sudden blaze  
Sweeps o'er the crackling champaign; through his host,  
Not with less swiftness, to the furthest ranks  
The words of great Leonidas diffus'd  
A more than mortal fervour. Ev'ry heart  
Distends with thoughts of glory, such as raise  
The patriot's virtue, and the soldier's fire,  
When danger, most tremendous in his form,  
Seems in their sight most lovely. On their minds  
Imagination pictures all the scenes  
Of war; the purple field, the heaps of dear,  
The glitt'ring trophy pierc'd with Persian arms.

But lo! the Grecian leaders, who before  
Were station'd near Thermopylæ, salute  
Laconia's king. The Thespian chief, ally'd  
To Dithyrambus, first the silence breaks;  
An ancient warrior. From behind his casque;  
Whose crested weight his aged temples bore,  
The slender hairs, all silver'd o'er by time,  
Flow'd venerably down. He thus began....

' Joy now shall crown the period of my days;  
And whether nigh my father's urn I sleep,  
Or, slain by Persia's sword, embrace the earth,  
Our common parent, be it as the gods  
Shall best determine. For the present hour  
I bless their bounty, which hath giv'n my age  
To see the brave Leonidas, and bid  
That hero welcome on this glorious shore,  
To fix the basis of the Grecian weal.'

Here too the crafty Anaxander spake....  
' Of all the Thebans, we, rejoicing, hail  
The king of Sparta. We obey'd his call.  
O may oblivion o'er the shame of Thebes  
A dark'ning veil extend! or those alone  
By fame be curs'd, whose impious counsels turn  
Their countrymen from virtue! Thebes was sunk,  
Her glory bury'd in dishonest sloth.'

To wake her languor gen'rous Alpheus came,  
The messenger of freedom. O accept  
Our grateful hearts! Thou, Alpheus, art the cause  
That Anaxander from his native gates  
Not single joins this host; nor tamely these,  
My chosen friends, behind their walls remain.  
Enough of words. Time presses. Mount, ye chiefs,  
This loftiest part of Oeta. This o'erlooks  
The straits, and far beyond their northern mouth  
Extends our sight across the Malian plain.  
Behold a native, Epialtes call'd,  
Who with the foe from Thracia's bounds hath march'd.

Disguis'd in seeming worth, he ended here.  
The camp not long had Epialtes reach'd.  
By race a Malian. Eloquent his tongue,  
His heart was false and abject. He was skill'd  
To grace perfidious counsels, and to clothe  
In swelling phrase the baseness of his soul,  
Foul nurse of treasons. To the tents of Greece,  
Himself a Greek, a faithless spy he came.  
Soon to the friends of Xerxes he repair'd,  
The Theban chiefs, and nightly councils held  
How to betray the Spartans, or deject  
By consternation. Up the arduous slope  
With him each leader to the summit climbs.  
Thence a tremendous prospect they command,  
Where endless plains, by white pavilions hid,  
Spread like the vast Atlantic, when no shore,  
No rock, no promontory, stops the sight,  
Unbounded, as it wanders; while the moon,  
Resplendent eye of night, in fullest orb,  
Surveys th' interminate expanse, and throws  
Her rays abroad, to deck in snowy light  
The dancing billows. Such was Xerxes' camp;  
A pow'r unrivall'd by the mightiest king,  
Or fiercest conqu'ror, whose blood-thirsty pride,  
Dissolving all the sacred ties which bind  
The happiness of nations, hath upcall'd  
The sleeping fury, Discord, from her den.  
Not from the hundred brazen gates of Thebes,  
The tow'rs of Memphis, and those pregnant fields,  
Enrich'd by kindly Nile, such armies swarm'd

Around Sesostris; who with trophies fill'd  
The vanquish'd east; who o'er the rapid foam  
Of distant Tanais, o'er the surface broad  
Of Ganges, sent his formidable name.  
Nor yet in Asia's far extended bounds  
E'er met such numbers; not when Ninus led  
Th' Assyrian race to conquest. Not the gates  
Of Babylon along Euphrates pour'd  
Such myriads arm'd; when, emptying all her streets,  
The rage of dire Semiramis they bore  
Beyond the Indus; there defeated, left  
His blood-stain'd current turbid with their dead.

Yet of the chiefs, contemplating this scene,  
Not one is shaken. Undismay'd they stand;  
Th' immeasurable camp with fearless eyes  
They traverse; while, in meditation, near  
The treach'rous Malian waits, collecting all  
His pomp of words to paint the hostile pow'r;  
Nor yet with falsehood arms his fraudulent tongue  
To feign a tale of terror. Truth, herself,  
Beyond the reach of fiction to enhance,  
Now aids his treason, and with cold dismay  
Might pierce the boldest heart, unless secur'd  
By dauntless virtue, which disdains to live  
From liberty divorce'd. Requested soon,  
He breaks his artful silence. 'Greeks and friends,  
Can I behold my native Malian fields,  
Presenting hostile millions to your sight,  
And not in grief suppress the horrid tale  
Which you exact from these ill-omen'd lips?  
On Thracia's sea-beat verge I watch'd the foes;  
Where, joining Europe to the Asian strand,  
A mighty bridge restrain'd th' outrageous waves,  
And stemm'd th' impetuous current; while in arms  
The universal progeny of men  
Seem'd trampling o'er the subjugated flood  
By thousands, by ten thousands. Persians, Medes,  
Assyrians, Sacae, Indians, swarthy files  
From Æthiopia, Egypt's tawny sons,  
Arabians, Bactrians, Parthians, all the strength  
Of Asia and of Libya. Neptune groan'd  
Beneath their number, and, indignant, heav'd

His neck against th' incumbent weight. In vain  
The violence of Eurus and the north,  
With rage combin'd, against th' unyielding pile  
Dash'd half the Hellespont. The eastern world  
Sev'n days and nights uninterrupted pass  
To cover Thracia's regions. They accept  
A Persian lord. They range their hardy race  
Beneath his standards. Macedonia's youth,  
The brave Thessalian horse, with ev'ry Greek  
Who dwells beyond Thermopylæ, attend,  
Assist a foreign tyrant. Sire of gods,  
Who in a moment, by thy will supreme,  
Canst quell the mighty in their proudest hopes,  
Canst raise the weak to safety, oh impart  
Thy instant succour! Interpose thy arm!  
With lightning blast their standards! Oh, confound,  
With triple-bolted thunder, Asia's tents,  
Whence rushing millions by the morn will pour  
An inundation to o'erwhelm the Greeks!  
Resistance else were vain against a host  
Which overspreads Thessalia. Far beyond  
That Malian campaign, stretching wide below,  
Beyond the utmost measure of the sight  
From this aspiring cliff, the hostile camp  
Contains yet mightier numbers; who have drain'd  
The beds of copious rivers with their thirst;  
Who with their arrows hide the mid-day sun.'

'Then we shall give them battle in the shade,'  
Dieneces reply'd. Not calmly thus  
Diomedon. On Persia's camp he bent  
His low'ring brow, which frowns had furrow'd o'er,  
Then fierce exclaim'd.... 'Bellona, turn, and view  
With joyful eyes that field, the fatal stage  
By regal madness for thy rage prepar'd  
To exercise its horrors! Whet thy teeth,  
Voracious death! All Asia is thy prey.  
Contagion, famine, and the Grecian sword,  
For thy insatiate hunger will provide  
Variety of carnage.' He concludes;  
While on the host immense his cloudy brow  
Is fix'd, disdainful, and their strength defies.

Meantime an eastern herald down the pass

Was seen slow-moving tow'ards the Phocian wall.  
 From Asia's monarch delegated, came  
 Tigranes and Phraortes. From the hill  
 Leonidas conducts th' impatient chiefs.  
 By them environ'd, in his tent he sits;  
 Where thus Tigranes their attention calls....

' Ambassadors from Persia's king, we stand  
 Before you, Grecians. To display the pow'r  
 Of our great master were a needless task.  
 The name of Xerxes, Asia's mighty lord,  
 Invincible, exalted on a throne  
 Surpassing human lustre, must have reach'd  
 To ev'ry clime, and ev'ry heart impress'd  
 With awe and low submission. Yet I swear,  
 By yon refulgent orb which flames above,  
 The glorious symbol of eternal pow'r,  
 This military throng, this shew of war,  
 Well nigh persuade me you have never heard  
 That name, at whose commanding sound the banks  
 Of Indus tremble, and the Caspian wave,  
 Th' Ægyptian flood, the Hellespontic surge,  
 Obedient roll. O impotent and rash!  
 Whom yet the large beneficence of heav'n,  
 And heav'nly Xerxes, merciful and kind,  
 Deign to preserve, resign your arms! Disperse  
 All to your cities! There let humblest hands  
 With earth and water greet your destin'd lord.'

As through th' extensive grove, whose leafy boughs,  
 Entwining, crown some eminence with shade,  
 The tempests rush sonorous, and between  
 The crashing branches roar; by fierce disdain,  
 By indignation, thus the Grecians, rous'd,  
 In loudest clamour close the Persian's speech.  
 But ev'ry tongue was hush'd, when Sparta's king  
 This brief reply deliver'd from his seat....

' O Persian, when to Xerxes thou return'st,  
 Say thou hast told the wonders of his pow'r.  
 Then say thou saw'st a slender band of Greece,  
 Which dares his boasted millions to the field.'

He adds no more. Th' ambassadors retire.  
 Them o'er the limits of the Grecian lines  
 Diomedon and Thespia's youth conduct.

In slow solemnity they all proceed,  
 And sullen silence; but their looks denote  
 Far more than speech could utter. Wrath contracts  
 The forehead of Diomedon. His teeth  
 Gnash with impatience of delay'd revenge.  
 Disdain, which sprung from conscious merit, flush'd  
 The cheek of Dithyrambus. On the face  
 Of either Persian, arrogance, incens'd  
 By disappointment, lour'd. The utmost strait  
 They now attain'd, which open'd on the tents  
 Of Asia, there discov'ring wide to view  
 Her deep, immense arrangement. Then the heart  
 Of vain Tigranes, swelling at the sight,  
 Thus overflows in loud and haughty phrase....

‘O Ariamnius, origin of ill,  
 Have we demanded of thy ruthless pow'r  
 Thus with the curse of madness to afflict  
 These wretched men? But, since thy dreadful ire  
 To irresistible perdition dooms  
 The Grecian race, we vainly should oppose.  
 Be thy dire will accomplish'd. Let them fall,  
 Their native soil be fatten'd with their blood.’

Enrag'd, the stern Diomedon replies....  
 ‘Thou base dependant on a lawless king,  
 Thou purple slave, thou boaster, dost thou know,  
 That I beheld the Marathonian field?  
 Where, like the Libyan sands before the wind,  
 Your host was scatter'd by Athenian spears?  
 Where thou, perhaps by ignominious flight,  
 Didst from this arm protect thy shiv'ring limbs?  
 O let me find thee in to-morrow's fight!  
 Along this rocky pavement shalt thou lie,  
 To dogs a banquet.’ With uplifted palms,  
 Tigranes then.... ‘Omnipotent support  
 Of scepter'd Xerxes, Hormazes, hear!  
 To thee his first victorious fruits of war  
 Thy worshipper devotes, the gory spoils,  
 Which from this Grecian, by the rising dawn,  
 In sight of either host, my strength shall rend.’

At length Phraortes, interposing, spake....  
 ‘I too would find, among the Grecian chiefs,  
 One who in battle dares abide my lance.’



The gallant youth of Thespia swift reply'd....  
 'Thou look'st on me, O Persian. Worthier far  
 Thou might'st have singled from the ranks of Greece,  
 Not one more willing, to essay thy force.  
 Yes, I will prove, before the eye of Mars,  
 How far the provess of her meanest chief  
 Beyond thy vaunts deserves the palm of fame.'

This said, the Persians to their king repair;  
 Back to their camp the Grecians. There they find  
 Each soldier poising his extended spear,  
 His weighty buckler bracing on his arm,  
 In warlike preparation. Through the files  
 Each leader, moving vigilant, by praise,  
 By exhortation, aids their native warmth.  
 Alone the Theban Anaxander pin'd,  
 Who thus apart his Malian friend bespake....

'What has thy lofty eloquence avail'd,  
 Alas! in vain attempting to confound  
 The Spartan valour? With redoubled fires,  
 See how their bosoms glow. They wish to die;  
 They wait impatient for th' unequal fight.  
 Too soon th' insuperable foes will spread  
 Promiscuous havock round, and Thebans share  
 The doom of Spartans. Through the guarded pass  
 Who will adventure Asia's camp to reach  
 In our behalf? that Xerxes may be warn'd  
 To spare his friends amid the gen'ral wreck;  
 When his high-swoln resentment, like a flood  
 Increas'd by stormy show'rs, shall cover Greece  
 With desolation.' Epialtes here....

'Whence, Anaxander, this unjust despair?  
 Is there a path on Oeta's hills unknown  
 To Epialtes? Over trackless rocks,  
 Through mazy woods, my secret steps can pass.  
 Farewell! I go. Thy merit shall be told  
 To Persia's king. Thou only watch the honr;  
 When wanted most, thy ready succour lend.'

Meantime a weary, comprehensive care  
 To ev'ry part Leonidas extends;  
 As in the human frame through ev'ry vein,  
 And artery minute, the ruling heart  
 Its vital pow'rs disperses. In his tent

The prudent chief of Locris he consults;  
 He summons Melibœus by the voice  
 Of Agis. In humility not mean,  
 By no unseemly ignorance depress'd,  
 Th' ingenuous swain, by all th' illustrious house  
 Of Ajax honour'd, bows before the king,  
 Who gracious spake.... 'The confidence bestow'd,  
 The praise by sage Oileus might suffice  
 To verify thy worth. Myself have watch'd,  
 Have found thee skilful, active, and discreet.  
 Thou know'st the region round. With Agis go,  
 The upper straits, the Phocian camp, explore.'

'O condescension!' Melibœus then,  
 'More ornamental to the great than gems,  
 A purple robe, or diadem! The king  
 Accepts my service. Pleasing is my task.  
 Spare not thy servant. Exercise my zeal.  
 Oileus will rejoice, and, smiling, say  
 An humble hand may smooth a hero's path.'

He leads the way, while Agis, following, spake....  
 'O swain, distinguish'd by a lib'ral mind,  
 Who were thy parents? Where thy place of birth?  
 What chance depriv'd thee of a father's house?  
 Oileus sure thy liberty would grant,  
 Or Sparta's king solicit for that grace;  
 When in a station equal to thy worth  
 Thou may'st be rank'd.' The prudent hind began....

'In diff'rent stations diff'rent virtues dwell,  
 All reaping diff'rent benefits. The great  
 In dignity and honours meet reward  
 For acts of bounty and heroic toils.  
 A servant's merit is obedience, truth,  
 Fidelity; his recompense content.  
 Be not offended at my words, O chief!  
 They, who are free, with envy may behold  
 This bondman of Oileus. To his trust,  
 His love exalted, I by nature's pow'r,  
 From his pure model, could not fail to mould  
 What thou entitlest lib'ral. Whence I came,  
 Or who my parents, is to me unknown.  
 In childhood seiz'd by robbers, I was sold.  
 They took their price; they hush'd th' atrocious deed.

Dear to Oileus and his race, I thrive ;  
And, whether noble or ignoble born,  
I am contented, studious of their love  
Alone. Ye sons of Sparta, I admire  
Your acts, your spirit, but confine my own  
To their condition, happy in my lord,  
Himself of men most happy.' Agis bland  
Rejoins. ' O born with talents to become  
A lot more noble, which, by thee refus'd,  
Thou dost the more deserve ! Laconia's king  
Discerns thy merit through its modest veil.  
Consummate prudence in thy words I hear.  
Long may contentment, justly priz'd, be thine !  
But, should the state demand thee, I foresee  
Thou wouldst, like others, in the field excel,  
Wouldst share in glory.' Blithe return'd the swain....

' Not ev'ry service is confin'd to arms.  
Thou shalt behold me in my present state  
Not useless. If the charge Oileus gave  
I can accomplish, meriting his praise  
And thy esteem, my glory will be full.'

Both pleas'd, in converse thus pursue their way,  
Where Oeta lifts her summits huge to heav'n  
In rocks abrupt, pyramidal, or tower'd,  
Like castles. Sudden from a tufted crag,  
Where goats are browsing, Melibœus hears  
A call of welcome. There his course he stays.



# LEONIDAS.

*BOOK IV.*

## The Argument.

*Tigranes and Phraortes repair to Xerxes, whom they find seated on a throne, surrounded by his Satraps, in a magnificent pavilion; while the Magi stand before him, and sing a hymn, containing the religion of Zoroastres. Xerxes, notwithstanding the arguments of his brothers, Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, gives no credit to the ambassadors, who report that the Grecians are determined to maintain the pass against him; but, by the advice of Artemisia, the queen of Caria, ascends his chariot, to take a view of the Grecians himself, and commands Demaratus, an exiled king of Sparta, to attend him. He passes through the midst of his army, consisting of many nations, differing in arms, customs, and manners. He advances to the entrance of the straits, and, surprised at the behaviour of the Spartans, demands the reason of it from Demaratus; which occasions a conversation between them, on the mercenary forces of Persia and the militia of Greece. Demaratus, weeping at the sight of his countrymen, is comforted by Hyperanthes. Xerxes, still incredulous, commands Tigranes and Phraortes to bring the Grecians bound before him the next day, and retires to his pavilion. Artemisia remains behind with her son, and communicates to Hyperanthes her apprehensions of a defeat at Thermopylae. She takes an accurate view of the pass, chooses a convenient place for an ambuscade, and, on her departure to the Persian camp, is surprised by a reproof from a woman of an awful appearance on a cliff of mount Oeta.*

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK IV.

THE plain beyond Thermopylæ is girt  
Half round by mountains, half by Neptune lav'd.  
The arduous ridge is broken deep in clefts,  
Which open channels to pellucid streams,  
In rapid flow sonorous. Chief in fame,  
Spercheos, boasting once his poplars tall,  
Foams down a stony bed. Throughout the face  
Of this broad champaign, numberless, are pitch'd  
Barbarian tents. Along the winding flood  
To rich Thessalia's confines they extend.  
They fill the vallies, late profusely bless'd  
In nature's varied beauties. Hostile spears  
Now bristle horrid through her languid shrubs.  
Pale die her flowrets under barb'rous feet.  
Embracing ivy from its rock is torn.  
The lawn, dismantled of its verdure, fades.  
The poplar groves, uprooted from the banks,  
Leave desolate the stream. Elab'rate domes,  
To heav'n devoted in recesses green,  
Had felt rude force, insensible and blind  
To elegance and art. The statues, busts,  
The figur'd vases, mutilated, lie,  
With chisel'd columns, their engraven frieze,  
Their architrave and cornice, all disjoin'd.

Yet, unpolluted, is a part reserv'd  
In this deep vale, a patrimonial spot  
Of Aleuadian princes, who, allies  
To Xerxes, reign'd in Thessaly. There glow  
Inviolat the shrubs. There branch the trees,  
Sons of the forest. Over downy moss  
Smooth walks and fragrant, lucid here and broad,  
There clos'd in myrtle under woodbine roofs,  
Wind to retreats delectable, to grots,

To silvan structures, bow'rs, and cooling dells,  
Enliven'd all, and musical, with birds  
Of vocal sweetness, in reluctant plumes  
Innumerable various. Lulling falls  
Of liquid crystal, from perennial founts,  
Attune their pebbled channels. Here the queen,  
The noble dames of Persia; here the train  
Of royal infants, each with eunuch guards,  
In rich pavilions, dazzling to the sight,  
Possess'd, remote from onset and surprise,  
A tranquil station. Ariana here,  
Ill-destin'd princess, from Darius sprung,  
Hangs, undelighted, o'er melodious rills  
Her drooping forehead. Love-afflicted fair!  
All inharmonious are the feather'd choirs  
To her sad ear. From flow'rs and florid plants,  
To her the breezes, wafting fresh perfumes,  
Transmit no pleasure. Sedulous in vain,  
Her tender slaves, in harmony, with lutes  
Of soothing sound, their warbled voices blend  
To charm her sadness. This, the precious part  
Of Asia's camp, Artuchus holds in charge;  
A Satrap, long experienc'd, who presides  
O'er all the regal palaces. High rank'd,  
Bold, resolute, and faithful, he commands  
The whole Sperchean vale. In prospect rise  
The distant navy, dancing on the foam,  
Th' unbounded camp, enveloping the plain;  
With Xerxes' tent, august in structure, plac'd  
A central object, to attract the eyes  
Of subject millions. Thither now resort  
Tigranes and Phraortes. Him they find  
Enclos'd by princes, by illustrious chiefs,  
The potentates of Asia. Near his side  
Abrocomes and Hyperanthes wait,  
His gallant brothers, with Mazæus brave,  
Pandates, Intaphernes, mighty lords!  
Their sceptred master from his radiant seat  
Looks down, imperious. So the stately tow'r  
Of Belus, mingling its majestic brow  
With heav'n's bright azure, from on high survey'd  
The huge extent of Babylon, with all



Her sumptuous domes and palaces beneath.  
This day his banners to unfurl in Greece  
The monarch's will decides; but first ordains  
That grateful hymns should celebrate the name  
Of Horomazes: so the Persians call'd  
The world's great author. Rob'd in purest white,  
The Magi rang'd before th' unfolded tent.  
Fire blaz'd beside them. Tow'rd the sacred flame  
They turn'd, and sent their tuneful praise to heav'n.

From Zoroastres was the song deriv'd,  
Who on the hills of Persia, from his cave,  
By flow'rs environ'd, and melodious founts,  
Which sooth'd the solemn mansion, had reveal'd  
How Horomazes, radiant source of good,  
Original, immortal, fram'd the globe  
In fruitfulness and beauty: how with stars  
By him the heav'ns were spangled: how the sun,  
Refulgent Mithra, purest spring of light  
And genial warmth, whence teeming nature smiles,  
Burst from the east at his creating voice;  
When, straight beyond the golden verge of day,  
Night shew'd the horrors of her distant reign,  
Where black and hateful Arimanius frown'd,  
The author foul of evil: how with shades  
From his dire mansion he deform'd the works  
Of Horomazes: turn'd to noxious heat  
The solar beam, that foodful earth might parch;  
That streams, exhaling, might forsake their beds:  
Whence pestilence and famine: how the pow'r  
Of Horomazes in the human breast  
Benevolence and equity infus'd,  
Truth, temperance, and wisdom, sprung from heav'n:  
When Arimanius blacken'd all the soul  
With falsehood and injustice, with desires  
Insatiable, with violence and rage,  
Malignity and folly. If the hand  
Of Horomazes on precarious life  
Shed's wealth and pleasure, swift th' infernal god  
With wild excess or av'rice, blasts the joy.  
Thou, Horomazes, victory dost give.  
By thee with fame the regal head is crown'd.  
Great Xerxes owns thy succour. When in storms

The hate of direful Arimanius swell'd  
The Hellespont, thou o'er its chafing breast  
The destin'd master of the world didst lead,  
This day his promis'd glories to enjoy :  
When Greece affrighted to his arm shall bend ;  
Ev'n as at last shall Arimanius fall  
Before thy might, and evil be no more.

The Magi ceas'd their harmony. Behold,  
From her tall ship, between a double row  
Of naval warriors, while a golden ray  
Shoots from her standard, Artemisia lands.  
In her enrich'd accoutrements of war,  
The full-wrought buckler and high-crested helm,  
In Caria first devis'd, across the beach  
Her tow'ring form advances. So the pine,  
From Taurus hewn, mature in spiry pride,  
Now by the sailor, in its canvas wings,  
Voluminous, and dazzling pendants dress'd,  
On Artemisia's own imperial deck  
Is seen to rise, and overtop the grove  
Of crowded masts surrounding. In her heart  
Deep scorn of courtly counsellors she bore,  
Who fill with impious vanity their king ;  
As when he lash'd the Hellespont with rods,  
Amid the billows cast a golden chain  
To fetter Neptune. Yet her brow severe  
Unbent its rigour often, as she glanc'd  
On her young son, who, pacing near in arms  
Of Carian guise, proportion'd to his years,  
Look'd up, and waken'd, by repeated smiles,  
Maternal fondness, melting in that eye  
Which scowl'd on purpled flatterers. Her seat  
At the right hand of Xerxes she assumes,  
Invited ; while in adoration bow'd  
Tigranes and Phraortes. Prone they lay ;  
Across their foreheads spread their servile palms,  
As from a present deity, too bright  
For mortal vision, to conceal their eyes.  
At length, in abject phrase, Tigranes thus....

' O Xerxes, live for ever ! Gracious lord,  
Who dost permit thy servants to approach  
Thy awful sight, and prostrate to confess

Thy majesty and radiance! May the pow'r  
Of Hormazes stretch thy' regal arm  
O'er endless nations, from the Indian shores  
To those wide floods which beat Iberian strands,  
From northern Tanais to the source of Nile!  
Still from thy head may Arimanius bend  
Against thy foes his malice! Yonder Greeks,  
Already smit with frenzy by his wrath,  
Reject thy proffer'd clemency. They choose  
To magnify thy glory by their fall.'

The monarch, turning to his brothers, spake....  
' Say, Hyperanthes, can thy soul believe  
These tidings? Sure these slaves have never dar'd  
To face the Grecians, but delude our ears  
With base impostures, which their fear suggests.'

He frown'd, and Hyperanthes calm reply'd....  
' O from his servants may the king avert  
His indignation! Greece was fam'd of old,  
For martial spirit and a dauntless breed.  
I once have try'd their valour. To my words  
Abrocomes can witness. When thy sire  
And ours, Darius, to Athenian shores,  
With Artaphernes brave and Datis, sent  
Our tender youth, at Marathon we found  
How weak the hope that numbers could dismay  
A foe, resolv'd on victory or death.  
Yet not as one contemptible, or base,  
Let me appear before thee. Though the Greeks  
With such persisting courage be endu'd,  
Soon as the king shall summon to the field,  
He shall behold me in the dang'rous van  
Exalt my spear, and pierce the hostile ranks,  
Or sink beneath them.' Xerxes swift rejoind'....

' Why over Asia, and the Libyan soil,  
With all their nations, doth my potent arm  
Extend its sceptre? Wherefore do I sweep  
Across the earth with millions in my train?  
Why shade the ocean with unnumber'd sails?  
Why all this pow'r, unless th' Almighty's will  
Decreed one master to the subject world;  
And that the earth's extremity alone  
Should bound my empire? He for this reduc'd

The Nile's revolted sons, enlarg'd my sway  
 With sandy Libya, and the sultry clime  
 Of Æthiopia. He for this subdn'd  
 The Hellespontic foam, and taught the sea  
 Obedience to my nod. Then dream no more  
 That heav'n deserting my imperial cause,  
 With courage more than human will inspire  
 Yon despicable Grecians, and expunge  
 The common fears of nature from their breasts.'

The monarch ceas'd. Abrocomes began....  
 'The king commands us to reveal our thoughts.  
 Incredulous he hears. But time and truth  
 Not Horomazes can arrest. Thy beams  
 To instant light'ning, Mythra, may'st thou change  
 For my destruction; may th' offended king  
 Frown on his servant; cast a loathing eye,  
 If the assertion of my lips be false:  
 Our further march those Grecians will oppose.'

Amid th' encircling peers Argestes sat,  
 A potent prince. O'er Sipylus he reign'd,  
 Whose verdant summits overlook'd the waves  
 Of Hermus and Pactolus. Either stream,  
 Enrich'd by golden sands, a tribute pay'd  
 To this great Satrap. Through the servile court  
 Yet none was found more practis'd in the arts  
 Of mean submission; none more skill'd to gain  
 The royal favour; none who better knew  
 The phrase, the look, the gesture, of a slave;  
 None more detesting Artemisia's worth;  
 By her none more despis'd. His master's eye  
 He caught, then spake.... 'Display thy dazzling state,  
 Thou deity of Asia. Greece will hide  
 Before thy presence her dejected face.'

Last Artemisia, rising stern, began....  
 'Why sits the lord of Asia in his tent,  
 Unprofitably wasting precious hours  
 In vain discussion, whether yonder Greeks,  
 Rang'd in defence of that important pass,  
 Will fight or fly? A question by the sword  
 To be decided. Still to narrow straits,  
 By land, by sea, thy council hath confin'd  
 Each enterprise of war. In numbers weak,

Twice have th' Athenians in Eubœa's frith  
 Repuis'd thy navy. But, whate'er thy will,  
 Be it enforc'd by vigour. Let the king  
 The difference see, by trial in the field,  
 Between smooth sound and valour. Then dissolve  
 These impotent debates. Ascend thy car.  
 The future stage of war thyself explore.  
 Behind thee leave the vanity of hope,  
 That such a foe to splendour will submit,  
 Whom steel, not gold, must vanquish. Thou provide  
 Thy mail, Argestes. Not in silken robes,  
 Not as in council with an oily tongue,  
 But spear to spear, and clanging shield to shield,  
 Thou soon must grapple on a field of blood.'

The king arose. 'No more. Prepare my car.  
 The Spartan exile, Demaratus, call.  
 We will ourselves advance to view the foe.'

The monarch will'd, and suddenly he heard  
 His trampling horses. High on silver wheels  
 The iv'ry car with azure sapphires shone,  
 Cærulean beryls, and the jasper green,  
 The emerald, the ruby's glowing blush,  
 The flaming topaz with its golden beam,  
 The pearl, th' empurpled amethyst, and all  
 The various gems, which India's mines afford  
 To deck the pomp of kings. In burnish'd gold  
 A sculptur'd eagle from behind display'd  
 His stately neck, and o'er the royal head  
 Outstretch'd his dazzling wings. Eight gen'rous steeds,  
 Which on the fam'd Nisæan plain were nurs'd  
 In wintry Media, drew the radiant car.  
 Not those of old to Hercules refus'd  
 By false Laomedon; nor they which bore  
 The son of Thetis through the scatter'd rear  
 Of Troy's devoted race, with these might vie  
 In strength or beauty. In obedient pride  
 They hear their lord. Exulting, in the air  
 They toss their foreheads. On their glist'ning chests  
 The silver manes disport. The king ascends.  
 Beside his footstool Demaratus sits.  
 The charioteer now shakes th' effulgent reins,  
 Strong Patirampes. At the signal bound

Th' attentive steeds; the chariot flies; behind,  
Ten thousand horse in thunder sweep the field.  
Down to the sea-beat margin, on a plain  
Of vast expansion, in battalia wait  
The eastern bands. 'To these th' imperial wheels,  
By princes follow'd in a hundred cars,  
Proceed. The queen of Caria and her son  
With Hyperanthes rode. The king's approach  
Swift through the wide arrangement is proclaim'd.  
He now draws nigh. Th' innumerable host  
Roll back by nations, and admit their lord,  
With all his Satraps. As from crystal domes,  
Built underneath an arch of pendant seas,  
When that stern pow'r, whose trident rules the floods,  
With each ærulean deity ascends,  
Thron'd in his pearly chariot, all the deep  
Divides its bosom to th' emerging god:  
So Xerxes rode between the Asian world,  
On either side receding: when, as down  
Th' immeasurable ranks his sight was lost,  
A momentary gloom o'ercast his mind,  
While this reflection fill'd his eyes with tears;  
That, soon as time a hundred years had told,  
Not one among those millions should survive.  
Whence to obscure thy pride arose that cloud?  
Was it that once humanity could touch  
A tyrant's breast? Or rather did thy soul  
Repine, O Xerxes, at the bitter thought  
That all thy pow'r was mortal? But the veil  
Of sadness soon forsook his bright'ning eye,  
As with adoring awe those millions bow'd,  
And to his heart relentless pride recall'd.  
Elate, the mingled prospect he surveys  
Of glitt'ring files, unnumber'd; chariots, scyth'd,  
On thund'ring axles roll'd; and haughty steeds,  
In sumptuous trappings clad; Barbaric pomp!  
While gorgeous banners to the sun expand  
Their streaming volumes of relucant gold,  
Pre-eminent, amidst tiaras gemm'd,  
Engraven helmets, shields emboss'd, and spears  
In number equal to the bladed grass,  
Whose living green in vernal beauty clothes

Thessalia's vale. What pow'rs of sounding verse  
Can to the mind present th' amazing scene?  
Not thee, whom rumour's fabling voice delights,  
Poetic fancy, to my aid I call;  
But thou, historic truth, support my song;  
Which shall the various multitude display,  
Their arms, their manners, and their native seats.

The Persians first in scaly corselets shone;  
A gen'rous nation, worthy to enjoy  
The liberty their injur'd fathers lost,  
Whose arms for Cyrus overturn'd the strength  
Of Babylon and Sardis. Pow'r advanc'd  
The victor's head above his country's laws.  
Their tongues were practis'd in the words of truth;  
Their limbs inur'd to ev'ry manly toil,  
To brace the bow, to rule th' impetuous steel,  
To dart the javelin; but, untaught to form  
The ranks of war, with unconnected force,  
With ineffectual fortitude, they rush'd,  
As on a fence of adamant, to pierce  
Th' indissoluble phalanx. Lances short,  
And osier-woven targets, they oppos'd  
To weighty Grecian spears, and massy shields.  
On ev'ry head tiaras rose like tow'rs,  
Impenetrable. With golden gloss  
Blaz'd their gay sandals, and the floating reins  
Of each proud courser. Daggers on their thighs,  
Well-furnish'd quivers on their shoulders, hung,  
And strongest bows of mighty size they bore.  
Resembling these in arms, the Medes are seen,  
The Cissians and Hyrcanians. Media once  
From her bleak mountains aw'd the subject east.  
Her kings in cold Ecbatana were thron'd.  
The Cissians march'd from Susa's regal walls,  
From sultry fields, o'erspread with branching palms,  
And white with lilies, water'd by the floods  
Of fam'd Choaspes. His transparent wave  
The costly goblet wafts to Persia's kings.  
All other streams the royal lip disdains.  
Hyrcania's race forsook their fruitful clime,  
Dark in the shadows of expanding oaks,  
To Ceres dear and Bacchus. There the corn,

Bent by its foodful burdens, sheds, unrep'd,  
 Its plenteous seed, impregnating the soil  
 With future harvests; whilst in ev'ry wood  
 Their precious labours on the loaden boughs  
 The honey'd swarms pursue. Assyria's sons  
 Display their brazen casques, unskillful work  
 Of rude Barbarians. Each sustains a mace,  
 O'erlaid with iron. Near Euphrates' banks,  
 Within the mighty Babylonian gates,  
 They dwell; and where, still mightier once in sway,  
 Old Ninus rear'd its head, th' imperial seat  
 Of eldest tyrants. These Chaldaëa joins,  
 The land of shepherds. From the pastures wide  
 There Belus first discern'd the various course  
 Of heav'n's bright planets, and the clust'ring stars,  
 With names distinguish'd; whence himself was deem'd  
 The first of gods. His sky-ascending fane  
 In Babylon the proud Assyrians rais'd.  
 Drawn from the bounteous soil, by Ochus lav'd,  
 The Bactrians stood, and, rough in skins of goats,  
 The Paricanian archers. Caspian ranks,  
 From barren mountains, from the joyless coast  
 Around the stormy lake, whose name they bore,  
 Their scymetars upheld, and cany bows.  
 The Indian tribes a threefold hold compose.  
 Part guide the courser, part the rapid car;  
 The rest on foot within the bending cane,  
 For slaughter, fix the iron-pointed reed.  
 They, o'er the Indus from the distant verge  
 Of Ganges passing, left a region, lov'd  
 By lavish nature. There the season bland  
 Bestows a double harvest. - Honey'd shrubs,  
 The cinnamon, the spikenard, bless their fields.  
 Array'd in native wealth, each warrior shines.  
 His ears bright-beaming pendants grace; his hands,  
 Encircled, wear a bracelet, starr'd with gems.  
 Such were the nations who to Xerxes sent  
 Their mingled aids of infantry and horse.

Now, Muse, recite what multitudes obscur'd  
 The plain on foot, or elevated high,  
 On martial axles or on camels, beat  
 The loosen'd mould. The Parthians first appear,



Then weak in numbers, from unfruitful hills,  
From woods, nor yet for warlike steeds renown'd.  
Near them the Sogdians, Dadices, arrange,  
Gandarians and Chorasmians. Sacian throngs  
From cold Imaus pour'd, from Oxus' wave,  
From Cyra, built on Iaxartes' brink,  
A bound of Persia's empire. Wild, untam'd,  
To fury prone, their deserts they forsook.  
A bow, a falchion, and a pond'rous axe,  
The savage legions arm'd. A pointed casque  
O'er each grim visage rear'd an iron cone.  
In arms like Persians, the Saranges stood.  
High as their knees, the shapely buskins clung  
Around their legs. Magnificent they trod,  
In garments richly tinctur'd. Next are seen  
The Pactian, Mycian, and the Utian train,  
In skins of goats rude vested. But in spoils  
Of tawny lions, and of spotted pards,  
The graceful range of Æthiopians shews  
An equal stature, and a beauteous frame.  
Their torrid region had imbrown'd their cheeks,  
And curl'd their jetty locks. In ancient song  
Renown'd for justice, riches they disdain'd,  
As foes to virtue. From their seat remote,  
On Nilus' verge above th' Ægyptian bound,  
Forc'd by their king's malignity and pride,  
These friends of hospitality and peace,  
Themselves uninjur'd, wage reluctant war  
Against a land, whose climate and whose name  
To them were strange. With hardest stone they point  
The rapid arrow. Bows four cubits long,  
Form'd of elastic branches from the palm,  
They carry, knotted clubs, and lances, arm'd  
With horns of goats. The Paphlagonians march'd  
From where Carambis, with projected brows,  
O'erlooks the dusky Euxin, wrapt in mists;  
From where, through flow'rs which paint his vary'd banks,  
Parthenius flows. The Ligyan bands succeed;  
The Matienians, Mariandenians, next;  
To them the Syrian multitudes, who range  
Among the cedars on the shaded ridge  
Of Libanus; who cultivate the glebe,

Wide-water'd by Orontes; who reside  
Near Daphne's grove, or pluck from loaded palms  
The foodful date, which clusters on the plains  
Of rich Damascus. All, who bear the name  
Of Cappadocians, swell the Syrian host,  
With those who gather from the fragrant shrub  
The aromatic balsam, and extract  
Its milky juice along the lovely side  
Of Jordan, winding, till, immers'd, he sleeps  
Beneath a pitchy surface, which obscures  
Th' Asphaltic pool. The Phrygians then advance;  
To them their ancient colony are join'd,  
Armenia's sons. These see the gushing founts  
Of strong Euphrate: cleave the yielding earth,  
Then, wide in lakes expanding, hide the plain;  
Whence, with collected waters, fierce and deep,  
His passage rending through diminish'd rocks,  
To Babylon he foams. Not so the stream  
Of soft Araxes to the Caspian glides;  
He stealing imperceptibly, sustains  
The green profusion of Armenia's meads.

Now, strange to view, in similar attire,  
But far unlike in manners, to the Greeks,  
Appear the Lydians. Wantonness and sport  
Were all their care. Beside Cæster's brink,  
Or smooth Mæander, winding silent by;  
Beside Pactolean waves, among the vines  
Of Tmolus rising, or the wealthy tide  
Of golden-sanded Hermus, they allure  
The sight, enchanted by the graceful dance;  
Or with melodious sweetness charm the air,  
And melt to softest languishment the soul.  
What to the field of danger could incite  
These tender sons of luxury? The lash  
Of their fell sov'reign drove their shiv'ring backs  
Through hail and tempest, which enrag'd the main,  
And shook beneath their trembling steps the pile,  
Conjoining Asia and the western world.  
To them Mæonia, hot with sulph'rous mines,  
Unites her troops. No tree adorns their fields,  
Unbless'd by verdure. Ashes hide the soil;  
Black are the rocks, and ev'ry hill deform'd

By conflagration. Helmets press their brows.  
Two darts they brandish. On their woolly vests  
A sword is girt; and hairy hides compose  
Their bucklers round and small. The Mysians left  
Olympus wood-envelop'd; left the meads  
Wash'd by Caicus, and the baneful tide  
Of Lycus, nurse to serpents. Next advance  
An ancient nation, who in early times,  
By Trojan arms assail'd, their native land  
Esteem'd less dear than freedom, and exchang'd  
Their seat on Strymon, where in Thrace he pours  
A freezing current, for the distant flood  
Of fishy Sangar. These, Bithynians nam'd,  
Their habitation to the sacred feet  
Of Dindimus extend. Yet there they groan  
Beneath oppression, and their freedom mourn  
On Sangar now, as once on Strymon, lost.  
The ruddy skins of foxes cloth'd their heads.  
Their shields were fashion'd like the horned moon.  
A vest embrac'd their bodies; while abroad,  
Ting'd with unnumber'd hues, a mantle flow'd.  
But other Thracians, who their former name  
Retain'd in Asia, fulgent morions wore,  
With horns of bulls, in imitating brass,  
Curv'd o'er the crested ridge. Phœnician cloth  
Their legs infolded. Wont to chase the wolf,  
A hunter's spear they grasp'd. What nations still  
On either side of Xerxes, while he pass'd,  
Their huge array discov'ring, swell his soul  
With more than mortal pride? The cluster'd bands  
Of Mōschians and Macronians now appear;  
The Mosynœcians, who, on berries fed,  
In wooden tow'rs along the Pontic sands  
Repose their painted limbs. The mirthful race  
Of Tibarenians next, whose careless minds  
Delight in play and laughter. Then advance,  
In garments buckled on their spacious chests,  
A people destin'd in eternal verse,  
Ev'n thine, sublime Mœonides, to live. -  
These are the Milyans; Solymi their name  
In thy celestial strains; Pisidia's hills  
Their dwelling. Once a formidable train,

They fac'd the strong Bellerophon in war:  
Now, doom'd a more tremendous foe to meet;  
Themselves unnerv'd by thralldom, they must leave  
Their putrid bodies to the dogs of Greece.  
The Marians follow. Next is Aria's host,  
Drawn from a region horrid all in thorn,  
A dreary waste of sands, which mock the toil  
Of patient culture; save one favour'd spot,  
Which from the wild emerges like an isle,  
Attir'd in verdure, interspers'd with vines  
Of gen'rous nurture, yielding juice which scorns  
The injuries of time: yet nature's hand  
Had sown their rocks with coral; had enrich'd  
Their desert hills with veins of sapphires blue,  
Which on the turban shine. On ev'ry neck  
The coral blushes through the num'rous throng.  
The Allarodians, and Sasperian bands,  
Equipp'd like Colchians, wield a falchion small.  
Their heads are guarded by a helm of wood;  
Their lances short; of hides undress'd their shields.  
The Colchians march'd from Phasis; from the strand  
Where once Medea, fair enchantress, stood,  
And, wond'ring, view'd the first advent'rous keel  
Which cut the Pontic foam. From Argo's side  
The demigods descended. They repair'd  
To her fell sire's inhospitable hall.  
His blooming graces Jason there disclos'd:  
With ev'ry art of eloquence divine  
He claim'd the golden fleece. The virgin heard;  
She gaz'd in fatal ravishment, and lov'd:  
Then to the hero she resigns her heart.  
Her magic tames the brazen-footed bulls.  
She lulls the sleepless dragon. O'er the main  
He wafts the golden prize, and gen'rous fair,  
The destin'd victim of his treach'rous vows.  
The hostile Colchians then pursu'd their flight  
In vain. By ancient enmity inflam'd,  
Or to recal the long-forgotten wrong,  
Compell'd by Xerxes, now they menace Greece  
With desolation. Next in Median garb  
A crowd appear'd, who left the peopled isles  
In Persia's gulph, and round Arabia strewn.

Some in their native topaz were adorn'd,  
 From Ophiodes, from Topazos sprung;  
 Some in the shells of tortoises, which brood  
 Around Casiti's verge. For battle range  
 Those who reside where, all beset with palms,  
 Erythras lies entomb'd, a potent king,  
 Who nam'd of old the Erythraean main.  
 On chariots scyth'd the Libyans sat, array'd  
 In skins terrific, brandishing their darts  
 Of wood, well-temper'd in the hard'ning flames.  
 Not Libya's deserts from tyrannic sway  
 Could hide her sons; much less could freedom dwell  
 Amid the plenty of Arabia's fields;  
 Where spicy cassia, where the fragrant reed,  
 Where myrrh and hallow'd frankincense, perfume  
 The Zephyr's wing. A bow of largest size  
 Th' Arabian carries. O'er his lucid vest  
 Loose floats a mantle, on his shoulder clasp'd.  
 Two chosen myriads on the lofty backs  
 Of camels rode, who match'd the fleetest horse.

Such were the numbers which, from Asia led,  
 In base prostration bow'd before the wheels  
 Of Xerxes' chariot. Yet what legions more  
 The Malian sand o'ershadow? Forward rolls  
 The regal car through nations, who in arms,  
 In order'd ranks, unlike the orient tribes,  
 Upheld the spear and buckler. But, untaught  
 To bend the servile knee, erect they stood;  
 Unless that, mourning o'er the shameful weight  
 Of their new bondage, some their brows depress'd,  
 Their arms with grief distaining. Europe's sons  
 Were these, whom Xerxes by resistless force  
 Had gather'd round his standards. Murm'ring here,  
 The sons of Thrace and Macedonia rang'd;  
 Here, on his steed, the brave Thessalian trown'd;  
 There pin'd reluctant multitudes of Greece,  
 Redundant plants, in colonies dispers'd  
 Between Byzantium and the Malian bay.

Through all the nations, who ador'd his pride  
 Or fear'd his pow'r, the monarch now was pass'd;  
 Nor yet among those millions could be found  
 One, who in beauteous features might compare.

Or tow'ring size, with Xerxes. O! possess'd  
 Of all but virtue, doom'd to shew how mean,  
 How weak, without her is unbounded pow'r!  
 The charm of beauty, and the blaze of state,  
 How insecure of happiness! how vain!  
 Thou, who couldst mourn the common lot, by heav'n  
 From none withheld, which oft to thousands proves  
 Their only refuge from a tyrant's rage;  
 Which in consuming sickness, age, or pain,  
 Becomes at last a soothing hope to all:  
 Thou, who couldst weep that nature's gentle hand  
 Should lay her weary'd offspring in the tomb;  
 Yet couldst, remorseless, from their peaceful seats  
 Lead half the nations, victims to thy pride,  
 To famine, plague, and massacre a prey;  
 What didst thou merit from the injur'd world?  
 What suff'rings, to compensate for the tears  
 Of Asia's mothers, for unpeopled realms,  
 For all this waste of nature? On his host  
 Th' exulting monarch bends his haughty sight,  
 To Demaratus then directs his voice....

‘ My father, great Darius, to thy mind  
 Recal, O Spartan. Gracious he receiv'd  
 Thy wand'ring steps, expell'd their native home.  
 My favour too remember. To beguile  
 Thy benefactor, and disfigure truth,  
 Would ill become thee. With consid'rate eyes  
 Look back on these battalions. Now declare  
 If yonder Grecians will oppose their march.’

To him the exile.... ‘ Deem not, mighty lord,  
 I will deceive thy goodness by a tale  
 To give them glory who degraded mine.  
 Nor be the king offended while I use  
 The voice of truth. The Spartans never fly.’

Contemptuous snil'd the monarch, and resum'd....  
 ‘ Wilt thou, in Lacedæmon once supreme,  
 Encounter twenty Persians? Yet these Greeks  
 In greater disproportion must engage  
 Our host to-morrow.’ Demaratus then....

‘ By single combat were the trial vain  
 To shew the pow'r of well-united force,  
 Which oft by military skill surmounts

The weight of numbers. Prince, the difference learn  
Between thy warriors and the sons of Greece.  
The flow'r, the safeguard, of thy num'rons camp  
Are mercenaries. These are canton'd round  
Thy provinces. No fertile field demands  
Their painful hand to break the fallow glebe.  
Them to the noon-day toil no harvest calls;  
Nor on the mountain falls the stubborn oak  
By their laborious axe. Their watchful eyes  
Observe not how the flocks and heifers feed.  
To them, of wealth, of all possessions, void,  
The name of country with an empty sound  
Flies o'er the ear, nor warms their joyless hearts,  
Who share no country. Needy, yet in scorn  
Rejecting labour, wretched by their wants,  
Yet profligate through indolence, with limbs  
Enervated and soft, with minds corrupt,  
From misery, debauchery, and sloth,  
Are these to battle drawn against a foe  
Train'd in gymnastic exercise and arms,  
Inur'd to hardship, and the child of toil,  
Wont through the freezing show'r, the wintry storm,  
O'er his own glebe the tardy ox to goad,  
Or in the sun's impetuous heat to glow,  
Beneath the burden of his yellow sheaves;  
Whence on himself, on her whose faithful arms  
Infold him joyful, on a growing race  
Which glad his dwelling, plenty he bestows  
With independence. When to battle call'd,  
For them, his dearest comfort, and his care,  
And for the harvest promis'd to his toil,  
He lifts the shield, nor shuns unequal force.  
Such are the troops of ev'ry state in Greece.  
One only yields a breed more warlike still,  
Of whom selected bands appear in sight,  
All citizens of Sparta. They the glebe  
Have never turn'd, nor bound the golden sheaf.  
They are devoted to severer tasks,  
For war alone, their sole delight and care.  
From infancy to manhood they are train'd  
To winter watches, to inclement skies,  
To plunge through torrents, brave the tusky boar,

To arms and wounds ; a discipline of pain  
 So fierce, so constant, that to them a camp,  
 With all its hardships, is a seat of rest,  
 And war itself remission from their toil.'

' Thy words are folly,' with redoubled scorn  
 Returns the monarch. ' Doth not freedom dwell  
 Among the Spartans? Therefore will they shun  
 Superior foes. The unrestrain'd and free  
 Will fly from danger ; while my vassals, born  
 To absolute controulment from their king,  
 Know, if th' allotted station they desert,  
 The scourge awaits them, and my heavy wrath.'

To this the exile....' O conceive not, prince,  
 That Spartans want an object w here to fix  
 Their eyes in rev'rence, in obedient dread.  
 To them more awful, than the name of king  
 To Asia's trembling millions, is the law ;  
 Whose sacred voice enjoins them to confront  
 Unnumber'd foes ; to vanquish, or to die.'  
 Here Demaratus pauses. Xerxes halts.

Its long defile Thermopylae presents.  
 The Satraps leave their cars. On foot they form  
 A splendid orb around their lord. By chance  
 'The Spartans then compos'd th' external guard.  
 They, in a martial exercise employ'd,  
 Heed not the monarch, or his gaudy train ;  
 But poise the spear, protended, as in fight ;  
 Or lift their adverse shields in single strife ;  
 Or, trooping, forward rush, retreat and wheel  
 In ranks unbroken, and with equal feet :  
 While others, calm, beneath their polish'd helms  
 Draw down their hair, whose length of sable curls  
 O'erspread their necks with terror. Xerxes here  
 The exile questions....' What do these intend,  
 Who with assiduous hands adjust their hair ?

To whom the Spartan....' O imperial lord,  
 Such is their custom, to adorn their heads,  
 When full determin'd to encounter death.  
 Bring down thy nations in resplendent steel ;  
 Arm, if thou canst, the gen'ral race of man,  
 All who possess the regions unexplor'd  
 Beyond the Ganges, all whose wand'ring steps



Above the Caspian range the Scythian wild,  
 With those who drink the secret fount of Nile;  
 Yet to Laconian bosoms shall dismay  
 Remain a stranger.' Fervour from his lips  
 Thus breaks aloud; when, gushing from his eyes,  
 Resistless grief o'erflows his cheeks. Aside  
 His head he turns. He weeps in copious streams.  
 The keen remembrance of his former state,  
 His dignity, his greatness, and the sight  
 Of those brave ranks, which thus unshaken stood,  
 And spread amazement through the world in arms,  
 Excite these sorrows. His impassion'd looks  
 Review the godlike warriors, who beneath  
 His standard once victorious fought; who call'd  
 Him once their king, their leader; then again,  
 O'ercharg'd with anguish, he bedews with tears  
 His rev'rend beard; in agony bemoans  
 His faded honours, his illustrious name,  
 Forgotten long, his majesty, defil'd  
 By exile, by dependence. So obscur'd  
 By sordid moss, and ivy's creeping leaf,  
 Some princely palace, or stupendous fane,  
 Magnificent in ruin, nods; where time  
 From under shelving architraves hath mow'd  
 The column down, and cleft the pond'rous dome.

Not unobserv'd by Hyperanthes, mourn'd  
 Th' unhappy Spartan. Kindly in his own  
 He press'd the exile's hand, and thus humane....

' O Demaratus, in this grief I see  
 How just thy praises of Laconia's state.  
 Though cherish'd here with universal love,  
 Thou still deplor'st thy absence from her face,  
 Howe'er averse to thine. But swift relief  
 From indignation borrow. Call to mind  
 Thy injuries. Th' auspicious fortune bless,  
 Which led thee far from calumny and fraud,  
 To peace, to honour, in the Persian court.'

As Demaratus, with a grateful mind,  
 His answer was preparing, Persia's king  
 Stern interrupted.... ' Soon as morning shines,  
 Do you, Tigranes and Phraortes, head  
 The Medes and Cissians. Bring these Grecians bound.'

This said, the monarch to his camp returns.  
Th' attendant princes reascend their cars,  
Save Hyperanthes, by the Carian queen  
Detain'd, who thus began.... 'Impartial, brave,  
Nurs'd in a court, yet virtuous, let my heart  
To thee its feelings undisguis'd reveal.  
Thou hear'st thy royal brother. He demands  
These Grecians bound. Why stops his mandate there?  
Why not command the mountains to remove,  
Or sink to level plains. Yon Spartans view,  
Their weighty arms, their countenance. To die  
My gratitude instructs me in the cause  
Of our imperial master. To succeed  
Is not within the shadow of my hopes  
At this dire pass. What evil genius sways?  
Tigranes, false Argestes, and the rest,  
In name a council, ceaseless have oppos'd  
My dictates, oft repeated in despite  
Of purpled flatt'ers, to embark a force,  
Which, pouring on Laconia, might confine  
These sons of valour to their own defence.  
Vain are my words. The royal ear admits  
Their sound alone; while adulation's notes  
In Siren sweetness penetrate his heart,  
There lodge ensnaring mischief.' In a sigh  
To her the prince.... 'O faithful to thy lord,  
Discreet adviser, and in action firm,  
What can I answer? My afflicted soul  
Must seek its refuge in a feeble hope.  
Thou mayst be partial to thy Doric race,  
Mayst magnify our danger. Let me hope,  
Whate'er the danger; if extreme, believe  
That Hyperanthes for his prince can bleed  
Not with less zeal than Spartans for their laws.'

They separate. To Xerxes he repairs.  
The queen, surrounded by the Carian guard,  
Stays, and retraces with sagacious ken  
The destin'd field of war, the vary'd space,  
Its depth, its confines, both of hill and sea.  
Meantime a scene more splendid hath allur'd  
Her son's attention. His transported sight,  
With ecstasy like worship, long pursues

The pomp of Xerxes in retreat, the throne,  
Which shew'd their idol to the nations round,  
The bounding steeds, caparison'd in gold,  
The plumes, the chariots, standards. He excites  
Her care, express'd in these pathetic strains....

' Look on the king with gratitude. His sire  
Protected thine. Himself upholds our state.  
By loyalty inflexible repay  
The obligation. To immortal pow'rs  
The adoration of thy soul confine ;  
And look undazzled on the pomp of man,  
Most weak when highest. Then the jealous gods  
Watch to supplant him. They his paths, his courts,  
His chambers, fill with flatt'ry's pois'nous swarms,  
Whose honey'd bane, by kingly pride devour'd,  
Consumes the health of kingdoms.' Here the boy,  
By an attention which surpass'd his years,  
Unlocks her inmost bosom. ' Thrice accurs'd  
Be those, th' indignant heroine pursues,  
' Those, who have tempted their imperial lord  
To that prepost'rous arrogance, which cast  
Chains in the deep to manacle the waves,  
Chastis'd with stripes in heav'n's offended sight  
The Hellespont, and fondly now demands  
The Spartans bound. O child, my soul's delight,  
Train'd by my care to equitable sway,  
And imitation of the gods, by deeds  
To merit their protection, heed my voice.  
They, who alone can tame or swell the floods,  
Compose the winds, or guide their strong career,  
O'erwhelming human greatness, will confound  
Such vanity in mortals. On our fleet  
Their indignation hath already fall'n.  
Perhaps our boasted army is prepar'd  
A prey for death, to vindicate their pow'r.'

This said, a curious search in ev'ry part  
Her eye renews. Adjoining to the straits,  
Fresh bloom'd a thicket of entwining shrubs,  
A seeming fence to some sequester'd ground,  
By travellers unbeaten. Swift her guards  
Address'd their spears to part the pliant boughs.  
Held back, they yield a passage to the queen

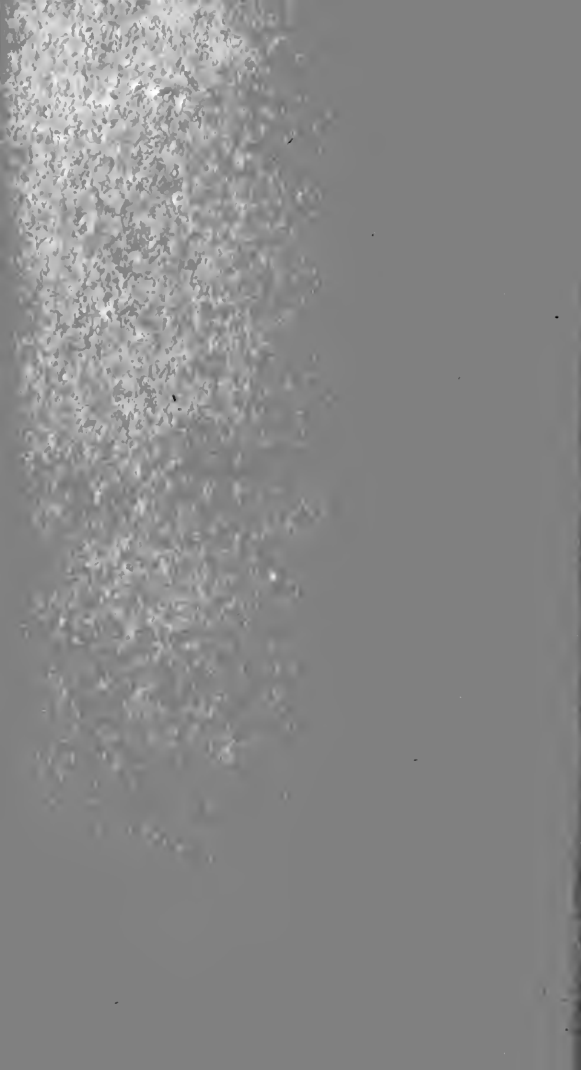
And princely boy. Delicious to their sight;  
Soft dales, meand'ring, shew their flow'ry laps  
Among rude piles of nature. In their sides  
Of rock are mansions hewn; nor loaden trees  
Of cluster'd fruit are wanting: but no sound,  
Except of brooks in murmur, and the song  
Of winged warblers, meets the list'ning ear.  
No grazing herd, no flock, nor human form,  
Is seen; no careful husband at his toil;  
Beside her threshold no industrious wife,  
No playful child. Instructive to her son  
The princess then.... 'Already these abodes  
Are desolate. Once happy in their homes,  
Th' inhabitants forsake them. Pleasing scene  
Of nature's bounty, soon will savage Mars  
Deform the lovely ringlets of thy shrubs,  
And coarsely pluck thy violated fruits,  
Unripe; will deafen, with his clangour fell,  
Thy tuneful choirs. I mourn thy destin'd spoil,  
Yet come thy first despoiler. Captains, plant,  
Ere morning breaks, my secret standard here.  
Come, boy, away. Thy safety will I trust  
To Demaratus; while thy mother tries,  
With these her martial followers, what sparks,  
Left by our Doric fathers, yet inflame  
Their sons and daughters in a stern debate  
With other Dorians, who have never breath'd  
The soft'ning gales of Asia, never bow'd  
In forc'd allegiance to Barbarian thrones.  
Thou heed my order. Those ingenuous looks  
Of discontent suppress. For thee this fight  
Were too severe a lesson. Thou might'st bleed  
Among the thousands fated to expire  
By Sparta's lance. Let Artemisia die,  
Ye all-disposing rulers, but protect  
Her son.' She ceas'd. The lioness, who reigns  
Queen of the forest, terrible in strength,  
And prone to fury, thus, by nature taught,  
Melts o'er her young in blandishment and love.  
Now slowly tow'rd's the Persian camp her steps  
In silence she directed; when a voice,  
Sent from a rock, accessible which-seem'd

To none but feather'd passengers of air,  
By this reproof detain'd her.... 'Caria's queen  
Art thou, to Greece by Doric blood ally'd;  
Com'st thou to lay her fruitful meadows waste,  
Thou homager of tyrants?' Upward gaz'd  
Th' astonish'd princess. Lo! a female shape,  
Tall and majestic, from th' impendent ridge  
Look'd awful down. A holy fillet bound  
Her graceful hair, loose flowing. Seldom wept  
Great Artemisia. Now a springing tear  
Between her eyelids gleam'd. 'Too true,' she sigh'd,  
'A homager of tyrants! Voice austere,  
And presence half-divine!' Again the voice....

'O Artemisia, hide thy Doric sword.  
Let no Barbarian tyrant through thy might,  
Thy counsels, valiant as thou art and wise,  
Consume the holy fanes, deface the tombs,  
Subvert the laws of Greece, her sons enthrall.'

The queen made no reply. Her breastplate heav'd.  
The tremulous attire of cov'ring mail  
Confess'd her struggle. She at length exclaim'd....

'Olympian thund'rer, from thy neighb'ring hill,  
Of sacred oaths remind me!' Then aside  
She turns, to shun that majesty of form,  
In solemn sounds upbraiding. Torn her thoughts  
She feels. A painful conflict she endures,  
With recollection of her Doric race;  
Till gratitude, reviving, arms her breast.  
Her royal benefactor she recalls,  
Back to his sight precipitates her steps.



# LEONIDAS.

*BOOK V.*

## The Argument.

*Leonidas, rising by break of day, hears the intelligence which Agis and Melibæus bring from the upper pass; then commands a body of Arcadians, with the Platæans and Thespians, to be drawn out for battle under the conduct of Demophilus in that part of Thermopylæ which lies close to the Phocian wall, from whence he harangues them. The enemy approaches. Diomedon kills Tigranes in single combat. Both armies join battle. Dithyrambus kills Phraortes. The Persians, entirely defeated, are pursued by Demophilus to the extremity of the pass. The Arcadians, inconsiderately advancing beyond it, fall into an ambush, which Artemisia had laid to cover the retreat of the Persians. She kills Clonius, but is herself repulsed by Demophilus. Diomedon and Dithyrambus give chase to her broken forces over the plains in the sight of Persia's camp, whence she receives no assistance. She rallies a small body, and, facing the enemy, disables Dithyrambus by a blow on his helmet. This puts the Grecians into some confusion, and gives her an opportunity of preserving the remainder of her Carians by a timely retreat. She gains the camp, accuses Argestes of treachery; but, pacified by Demaratus, is accompanied by him with a thousand horse to collect the dead bodies of her soldiers for sepulture.*



# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK V.

AURORA dawn'd. Leonidas arose.  
With Melibœus Agis, now return'd,  
Address'd the king.... Along the mountain's side  
We bent our journey. On our way a voice,  
Loud from a crag, on Melibœus call'd.  
He look'd and answer'd. Mycon, ancient friend!  
Far hast thou driv'n thy bearded train to-day;  
But fortunate thy presence. None like thee,  
Inhabitant of Oeta from thy birth,  
Can furnish that intelligence which Greece  
Wants for her safety. Mycon shew'd a track.  
We mounted high. The summit, where we stopt,  
Gave to the sight a prospect wide o'er hills,  
O'er dales, and forests, rocks, and dashing floods  
In cataracts. The object of our search  
Beneath us lay, the secret pass to Greece,  
Where not five warriors in a rank can tread.  
We thence descended to the Phocian camp,  
Beset with scatter'd oaks, which rose and spread  
In height and shade; on whose sustaining boughs  
Were hung, in snowy folds, a thousand tents,  
Containing each a Phocian, heavy-mail'd,  
With two light-weapon'd menials. Northward ends  
The vale, contracted to that narrow strait  
Which first we saw with Mycon. 'Prudent care  
Like yours alleviates mine,' well-pleas'd, the king  
Reply'd. 'Now, Agis, from Arcadia's bands  
Select a thousand spears. To them unite  
The Thespians and Plataeans. Draw their lines  
Beneath the wall which fortifies the pass.  
There, close-embodiy'd, will their might repulse  
The num'rous foe. Demophilus salute.

Approv'd in martial service, him I name  
The chief supreme.' Obedient to his will,  
Th' appointed warriors, issuing from the tents,  
Fill their deep files, and watch the high command.  
So round their monarch, in his stormy hall,  
The winds assemble. From his dusky throne  
His dreadful mandates Æolus proclaims  
To swell the main, or heav'n with clouds deform,  
Or bend the forest from the mountain's brow.  
Laconia's leader, from the rampart's height,  
To battle thus the list'ning host inflames....

' This day, O Grecians, countrymen, and friends,  
Your wives, your offspring, your paternal seats,  
Your parents, country, liberty, and laws,  
Demand your swords. You, gen'rous, active, brave,  
Vers'd in the various discipline of Mars,  
Are now to grapple with ignoble foes,  
In war unskilful, nature's basest dross,  
And thence a monarch's mercenary slaves.  
Relax'd their limbs, their spirits are deprav'd  
By eastern sloth and pleasures. Hire their cause.  
Their only fruit of victory is spoil.  
They know not freedom, nor its lib'ral cares.  
Such is the flow'r of Asia's host. The rest;  
Who fill her boasted numbers, are a crowd  
Forc'd from their homes; a populace in peace  
By jealous tyranny disarm'd, in war  
Their tyrant's victims. Taught in passive grief  
To bear the rapine, cruelty, and spurns,  
Of Xerxes' mercenary band, they pine  
In servitude to slaves. With terror sounds  
The trumpet's clangour in their trembling ears.  
Unwonted loads, the buckler and the lance,  
Their hands sustain, encumber'd, and present  
The mockery of war.... But ev'ry eye  
Shoots forth impatient flames. Your gallant breasts  
Too long their swelling spirit have confin'd.  
Go then, ye sons of liberty; go, sweep  
These bondmen from the field. Resistless, rend  
The glitt'ring standard from their servile grasp.  
Hurl to the ground their ignominious heads,

The warrior's helm profaning. Think the shades  
Of your forefathers lift their sacred brows,  
Here to enjoy the glory of their sons.'

He spake. Loud pæans issue from the Greeks.  
In fierce reply, Barbarian shouts ascend  
From hostile nations, thronging down the pass.  
Such is the roar of Ætna, when his mouth  
Displodes combustion from his sulph'rous depths,  
To blast the smiles of nature. Dauntless stood  
In deep array, before the Phocian wall  
The phalanx, wedg'd with implicated shields,  
And spears protended; like the graceful range  
Of arduous elms, whose interwoven boughs  
Before some rural palace wide expand  
Their venerable umbrage, to retard  
The North's impetuous wing. As o'er the main  
In lucid rows, the rising waves reflect  
The sun's effulgence; so the Grecian helms  
Return'd his light, which o'er their convex pour'd  
A splendour, scatter'd through the dancing plumes.

Down rush the foes. Exulting, in their van  
Their haughty leader shakes his threat'ning lance,  
Provoking battle. Instant from his rank  
Diomedon bursts furious. On he strides;  
Confronts Tigranes, whom he thus defies....

'Now art thou met, Barbarian. Wouldst thou prove  
Thy actions equal to thy vaunts, command  
Thy troops to halt, while thou and I engage.'

Tigranes, turning to the Persians, spake....  
'My friends and soldiers, check your martial haste,  
While my strong lance that Grecian's pride confounds.'

He ceas'd. In dreadful opposition soon  
Each combatant advanc'd. Their sinewy hands  
Grip'd fast their spears, high-brandish'd. They thrice  
drove,

With well directed force, the pointed steel  
At either's throat, and thrice their weary shields  
Repel'd the menac'd wound. The Asian chief  
At length, with pow'rs collected for the stroke,  
His weapon rivets in the Grecian targe.

Aside Diomedon inclines, and shuns  
Approaching fate; then all his martial skill

Undaunted summons. His forsaken spear  
 Beside him cast, his falchion he unsheaths.  
 The blade descending on Tigranes' arm,  
 That instant struggling to redeem his lance,  
 The nervous hand dissevers. Pale affright  
 Unmans the Persian; while his active foe  
 Full on his neck discharg'd the rapid sword,  
 Which open'd wide the purple gates of death.  
 Low sinks Tigranes in eternal shade.  
 His prostrate limbs the conqueror bestrides;  
 Then, in a tuft of blood-distilling hair  
 His hand entwining, from the mangled trunk  
 The head disjoins, and whirls with matchless strength  
 Among the adverse legions. All in dread  
 Recoil'd, where'er the ghastly visage flew  
 In sanguine circles, and pursu'd its track  
 Of horror through the air. Not more amaz'd,  
 A barb'rous nation, whom the cheerful dawn  
 Of science ne'er illumin'd, view on high  
 A meteor, waving its portentous fires;  
 Where oft, as superstition vainly dreams,  
 Some demon sits amid the baneful blaze,  
 Dispersing plague and desolation round.  
 Awhile the stern Diomedon remain'd  
 Triumphant o'er the dire dismay, which froze  
 The heart of Persia; then, with haughty pace,  
 In sullen joy, among his gladsome friends  
 Resum'd his station. Still the hostile throng,  
 In consternation motionless, suspend  
 The charge. Their drooping hearts Phraortes warms  
 'Heav'n! can one leader's fate appal this host,  
 Which counts a train of princes for its chiefs?  
 Behold Phraortes. From Niphrates' ridge  
 I draw my subject files. My hardy toil  
 Through pathless woods and deserts hath explor'd  
 The tiger's cavern. This unconquer'd hand  
 Hath from the lion rent his shaggy hide.  
 So through this field of slaughter will I chase  
 Yon vaunting Greek.' His ardent words revive  
 Declining valour in the van. His lance  
 Then in the rear he brandishes. The crowd,  
 Before his threat'ning ire affrighted, roll

Their numbers headlong on the Grecian steel.  
 Thus, with his trident, ocean's angry god  
 From their vast bottom turns the mighty mass  
 Of waters upward, and o'erwhelms the beach.

Tremendous frown'd the fierce Plataean chief,  
 Full in the battle's front. His ample shield,  
 Like a strong bulwark, prominent he rais'd  
 Before the line. There thunder'd all the storm  
 Of darts and arrows. His undaunted train  
 In emulating ardour charg'd the foe.  
 Where'er they turn'd the formidable spears,  
 Which drench'd the glebe of Marathon in blood,  
 Barbarian dead lay heap'd. Diomedon  
 Led on the slaughter. From his nodding crest  
 The sable plumes shook terror. Asia's host  
 Shrank back, as blasted by the piercing beams  
 Of that unconquerable sword which fell  
 With lightning's swiftness on dis sever'd helms,  
 And, menacing Tigranes' doom to all,  
 Their multitude dispers'd. The furious chief,  
 Encompass'd round by carnage, and besmear'd  
 With sanguine drops, inflames his warlike friends....

' O Dithyrambus, let thy deeds this day  
 Surmount their wonted lustre. Thou in arms,  
 Deinophilus, worn grey, thy youth recal.  
 Behold, these slaves without resistance bleed.  
 Advance, my hoary friend. Propitious fame  
 Smiles on thy years. She grants thy aged hand  
 To pluck fresh laurels for thy honour'd brow.'

As, when endu'd with Promethéan heat,  
 The molten clay respir'd, a sudden warmth  
 Glows in the venerable Thespian's veins;  
 In ev'ry sinew new-born vigour swells.  
 His falchion, thund'ring on Cherasmes' helm,  
 The forehead cleaves. Ecbatana to war  
 Sent forth Cherasmes. From her potent gates  
 He, proud in hope, her swarming numbers led.  
 Him Ariazus and Peucestes join'd,  
 His martial brothers. They attend his fate,  
 By Dithyrambus pierc'd. Their hoary sire  
 Shall o'er his solitary palace roam;  
 Lamenting loud his childless years, shall curse

Ambition's fury, and the lust of war ;  
Then, pining, bow in anguish to the grave.

Next, by the fierce Plataean's fatal sword,  
Expir'd Damates, once the host and friend  
Of fall'n Tigranes. By his side to fight,  
He left his native hands. Of Syrian birth,  
In Daphné he resided, near the grove  
Whose hospitable laurels, in their shade,  
Conceal'd the virgin fugitive, averse  
To young Apollo. Hither she retir'd,  
Far from her parent stream. Here fables feign,  
Herself a laurel, chang'd her golden hair  
To verdant leaves in this retreat, the grove  
Of Daphné call'd, the seat of rural bliss,  
Fann'd by the breath of Zephyrs, and with rills  
From bubbling founts irriguous, Syria's boast,  
The happy rival of Thessalia's vale ;  
Now hid for ever from Damates' eyes.

Demophilus, wise leader, soon improves  
Advantage. All the vet'rans of his troop,  
In age his equals, to condense the files,  
To rivet close their bucklers, he commands.  
As some broad vessel, heavy in her strength,  
But well compacted, when a fav'ring gale  
Invites the skilful master to expand  
The sails at large, her slow but steady course  
Impels through myriads of dividing waves ;  
So, unresisted, through Barbarian throngs  
The hoary phalanx pass'd. Arcadia's sons  
Pursu'd more swift. Gigantic Clonius press'd  
The yielding Persians, who before him sunk,  
Crush'd, like vile stubble underneath the steps  
Of some glad peasant, visiting his fields  
Of new-shorn harvest. On the gen'ral rout  
Phraortes look'd intrepid still. He sprang  
O'er hills of carnage to confront the foe.  
His own inglorious friends he thus reproach'd....

' Fly then, ye cowards, and desert your chief.  
Yet, single, here my target shall oppose  
The shock of thousands.' Raging, he impels  
His deathful point through Aristander's breast.  
Him Dithyrambus lov'd. A sacred bard,

Rever'd for justice, for his verse renown'd,  
He sung the deeds of heroes; those who fell,  
Or those who conquer'd, in their country's cause;  
Th' enraptur'd soul inspiring with the love  
Of glory, earn'd by virtue. His high strain  
The Muses favour'd from their neighb'ring bow'rs,  
And bless'd with heav'nly melody his lyre.  
No more from Thespia shall his feet ascend  
The shady steep of Helicon; no more  
The stream divine of Aganippe's fount  
Bedew his lip, harmonious; nor his hands,  
Which, dying, grasp the unforsaken lance,  
And prostrate buckler, ever more accord  
His lofty numbers to the sounding shell.  
Lo! Dithyrambus weeps! Amid the rage  
Of war and conquest, swiftly-gushing tears  
Find one sad moment's interval to fall  
On his pale friend. But soon the victor proves  
His stern revenge. Through shield and corselet plung'd,  
His forceful blade divides the Persian's chest;  
Whence issue streams of royal blood, deriv'd  
From ancestors who sway'd in Ninus old  
Th' Assyrian sceptre. He to Xerxes' throne  
A tributary satrap, rul'd the vales  
Where Tigris swift, between the parted hills  
Of tall Niphates, drew his foamy tide,  
Impregnating the meads: Phraortes sinks,  
Not instantly expiring. Still his eyes  
Flash indignation, while the Persians fly.

Beyond the Malian entrance of the straits  
Th' Arcadians rush; when, unperceiv'd till felt,  
Spring, from concealment in a thicket deep,  
New swarms of warriors, clust'ring on the flank  
Of these unwary Grecians. Tow'rd's the bay  
They shrink. They totter on the fearful edge,  
Which overhangs a precipice. Surpris'd,  
The strength of Clonius fails. His giant bulk  
Beneath the chieftain of th' assailing band  
Falls prostrate. Thespians and Plateæans wave  
Auxiliar ensigns. They encounter foes  
Resembling Greeks in discipline and arms.  
Dire is the shock. What less than Caria's queen,

In their career of victory, could check  
Such warriors? Fierce she struggles; while the rout  
Of Medes and Cissians carry to the camp  
Contagious terror? thence no succour flows.  
Demophilus stands firm; the Carian band  
At length recoil before him. Keen pursuit  
He leaves to others, like th' almighty sire,  
Who sits unshaken on his throne, while floods,  
His instruments of wrath, o'erwhelm the earth,  
And whirlwinds level on her hills the growth  
Of proudest cedars. Through the yielding crowd,  
Plataea's chief and Dithyrambus range,  
Triumphant, side by side. Thus o'er the field  
Where bright Alpheus heard the rattling car,  
And concave hoof along his echoing banks,  
Two gen'rous coursers, link'd in mutual reins,  
In speed, in ardour equal, beat the dust  
To reach the glories of Olympia's goal.  
Th' intrepid heroes on the plain advance,  
They press the Carian rear. Not long the queen  
Endures that shame. Her people's dying groans  
Transpierce her bosom. On their bleeding limbs  
She looks maternal, feels maternal pangs.  
A troop she rallies. Goddess-like, she turns,  
Not less than Pallas with her Gorgon shield.  
Whole ranks she covers, like th' imperial bird,  
Extending o'er a nest of callow young  
Her pinion broad, and pointing fierce her beak,  
Her claws outstretch'd. The Thespian's ardent hand,  
From common fives refraining, hastes to snatch  
More splendid laurels from that nobler head.  
His pond'rous falchion, swift descending, bears  
Her buckler down; thence glancing, cuts the thong  
Which holds her headpiece fast. That golden fence  
Drops down. Thick tresses, unconfin'd, disclose  
A female warrior; one, whose summer pride  
Of fleeting beauty had begun to fade,  
Yet by th' heroic character supply'd,  
Which grew more awful, as the touch of time  
Remov'd the soft'ning graces. Back he steps,  
Unman'd by wonder. With indignant eyes,  
Fire-darting, she advances. Both her hands



Full on his crest discharge the furious blade.  
The forceful blow compels him to recede  
Yet further back, unwounded, though confus'd.  
His soldiers flock around him. From a scene  
Of blood more distant speeds Plataea's chief.  
The fair occasion of suspended fight  
She seizes, bright in glory wheels away,  
And saves her Carian remnant. While his friend  
In fervent sounds Diomedon bespake....

'If thou art slain, I curse this glorious day.  
Be all thy trophies, be my own, accurs'd.'

The youth, recover'd, answers in a smile....

'I am unhurt. The weighty blow proclaim'd  
The queen of Caria, or Bellona's arm.  
Our longer stay Demophilus may blame.  
Let us prevent his call.' This said, their steps  
They turn, both striding through empurpled heaps  
Of arms, and mangled slain, themselves with gore  
Distain'd; like two grim tigers, who have forc'd  
A nightly mansion, on the desert rais'd  
By some lone-wand'ring traveler, then, dy'd  
In human crimson, through the forest deep  
Back to their covert's dreary gloom retire.

Stern Artemisia, sweeping o'er the field,  
Bursts into Asia's camp. A furious look  
She casts around. Abrocomes remote  
With Hyperanthes from the king were sent.  
She sees Argestes in that quarter chief,  
Who from battalions numberless had spar'd  
Not one to succour, but his malice gorg'd  
With her distress. Her anger now augments.  
Revenge frowns gloomy on her darken'd brow.  
He cautious moves to Xerxes, where he sat  
High on his car. She follows. Lost her helm;  
Resign'd to sportive winds her cluster'd locks,  
Wild, but majestic, like the waving boughs  
Of some proud elm, the glory of the grove,  
And full in foliage. Her emblazon'd shield  
With gore is tarnish'd. Pale around are seen,  
All faint, all ghastly from repeated wounds,  
Her bleeding soldiers. Brandishing her sword,  
To them she points, to Xerxes thus she speaks....

Behold these mangled Carians, who have spent  
 Their vital current in the king's defence,  
 Ev'n in his sight ; while Medes and Cissians fled,  
 By these protected, whom Argestes saw  
 Pursu'd by slaughter to thy very camp,  
 Yet left unhelp'd to perish. Ruling sire,  
 Let Horomazes be thy name, or Jove,  
 To thee appealing, of the king I claim  
 A day, for justice. Monarch, to my arm  
 Give him a prey. Let Artemisia's truth  
 Chastise his treason.' With an eye submiss,  
 A mien obsequious, and a soothing tone,  
 To cheat the king, to moderate her ire,  
 Argestes utters these fallacious words....

' May Horomazes leave the fiend at large  
 To blast my earthly happiness, confine  
 Amid the horrors of his own abode  
 My ghost hereafter, if the sacred charge  
 Of Xerxes' person was not my restraint,  
 My sole restraint ! To him our all is due ;  
 Our all how trifling, with his safety weigh'd !  
 His preservation I prefer to fame,  
 And bright occasion for immortal deeds  
 Forego in duty. Else my helpful sword,  
 Fair heroine of Asia, hadst thou seen  
 Among the foremost blazing. Lo ! the king  
 A royal present will on thee bestow,  
 Perfumes and precious unguents on the dead,  
 A golden wreath to each survivor brave.'

Aw'd by her spirit, by the flatt'rer's spell  
 Deluded, languid through dismay and shame  
 At his defeat, the monarch for a time  
 Sat mute, at length unlock'd his falt'ring lips....

' Thou hear'st, great princess. Rest content. His words  
 I ratify. Yet, farther, I proclaim  
 Thee of my train first counsellor and chief.'

' O eagle-ey'd discernment in the king !  
 O wisdom equal to his boundless power !'  
 The purpled sycophant exclaims. ' Thou seest  
 Her matchless talents. Wanting her, thy fleet,  
 The floating bulwark of our hopes, laments,  
 Foil'd in her absence, in her conduct safe.

Thy penetrating sight directs the field;  
There let her worth be hazarded no more.'

'Thy words are wise,' the blinded prince rejoins.

'Return, brave Carian, to thy naval charge.'

Thus, to remove her from the royal ear,  
Malicious guile prevails. Redoubled rage  
Swells in her bosom. Demaratus sees,  
And calms the storm, by rend'ring up his charge  
To her maternal hand. Her son, belov'd,  
Dispels the furies. Then the Spartan thus....

'O Artemisia, of the king's command  
Be thou observant. To thy slaughter'd friends  
Immediate care, far other than revenge,  
Is due. The ravens gather. From his nest  
Among those cliffs, the eagle's rapid flight  
Denotes his scent of carnage. Thou, a Greek  
Well know'st the duty sacred to the dead.  
Depart; thy guide is piety. Collect,  
For honourable sepulchres prepare,  
Those bodies, mark'd with honourable wounds.  
I will assist thee. Xerxes will intrust  
To my command a chosen guard of horse.'

As oft, when storms in summer have o'ercast  
The night with double darkness, only pierc'd  
By heav'n's blue fire, while thunder shakes the pole,  
The orient sun, diffusing genial warmth,  
Refines the troubled air; the blast is mute;  
Death-pointed flames disperse; and placid Jove  
Looks down in smiles: so prudence from the lips  
Of Demaratus, by his tone, his mien,  
His aspect strength'ning smooth persuasion's flow,  
Compos'd her spirit. She with him departs.  
The king assigns a thousand horse to guard  
Th' illustrious exile and heroic dame.



# LEONIDAS.

*BOOK VI.*

## The Argument.

*The Grecian commanders, after the pursuit, retire for refreshment to a cave in the side of mount Oeta. Demophilus returns to the camp; Diomedon remains in the cave; while Dithyrambus discovering a passage through it, ascends to the temple of the Muses. After a long discourse with Melissa, the daughter of Oileus, she intrusts him with a solemn message to Leonidas. Dithyrambus deposes this charge to Megistias, the augur. Leonidas, recalling the forces first engaged, sends down a fresh body. Diomedon and Dithyrambus are permitted, on their own request, to continue in the field with the Plataeans. By the advice of Diomedon, the Grecians advance to the broadest part of Thermopylae, where they form a line of twenty in depth, consisting of the Plataeans, Mantineans, Tegaans, Thebans, Corinthians, Phliasians, and Mycenæans. The Spartans compose a second line in a narrower part. Behind them are placed the light armed troops under Alpheus, and further back a phalanx of Locrians under Medon, the son of Oileus. Dienece commands the whole.*

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK VI.

NOW Dithyrambus and Plataea's chief,  
Their former post attaining, had rejoin'd  
Demophilus. Recumbent on his shield,  
Phraortes, gasping there, attracts their sight.  
To him in pity Thespia's gallant youth,  
Approaching, thus his gen'rous soul express'd....

' Liv'st thou, brave Persian? By propitious Jove,  
From whom the pleasing stream of mercy flows  
Through mortal bosoms, less my soul rejoice'd,  
When fortune bless'd with victory my arm,  
Than now to raise thee from this field of death.'

His languid eyes the dying prince unclos'd,  
Then with expiring voice.... ' Vain man, forbear  
To proffer me what soon thyself must crave.  
The day is quite extinguish'd in these orbs.  
One moment fate allows me to disdain  
Thy mercy, Grecian. Now I yield to death.'

This effort made, the haughty spirit fled.  
So shoots a meteor's transitory gleam  
Through nitrous folds of black nocturnal clouds,  
Then dissipates for ever. O'er the corse  
His rev'rend face Demophilus inclin'd,  
Pois'd on his lance, and thus address'd the slain....

' Alas! how glorious were that bleeding breast,  
Had justice brac'd the buckler on thy arm,  
And to preserve a people bade thee die!  
Who now shall mourn thee? Thy ungrateful king  
Will soon forget thy worth. Thy native land  
May raise an empty monument, but feel  
No public sorrow. Thy recorded name  
Shall wake among thy countrymen no sighs  
For their lost hero. What to them avail'd  
Thy might, thy dauntless spirit? Not to guard

Their wives, their offspring, from th' oppressor's hand,  
 But to extend oppression, didst thou fall,  
 Perhaps, with inborn virtues in thy senl,  
 Which, but thy froward destiny forbade,  
 By freedom cherish'd, might have bless'd mankind.  
 All-bounteous nature, thy impartial laws  
 To no selected race of men confine  
 The sense of glory, fortitude, and all  
 The nobler passions, which exalt the mind,  
 And render life illustrious. These thou plant'st  
 In ev'ry soil. But freedom, like the sun,  
 Must warm the gen'rous seeds. By her alone  
 They bloom, they flourish; while oppression blasts  
 The tender virtues: hence a spurious growth,  
 False honour, savage valour, taint the soul,  
 And wild ambition: hence rapacious pow'r  
 The ravag'd earth unpeoples, and the brave,  
 A feast for dogs, th' ensanguin'd field bestrew.'

He said. Around the venerable man  
 The warriors throng'd, attentive. Conquest hush'd  
 Its joyful transports. O'er the horrid field,  
 Rude scene so late of tumult, all was calm.  
 So, when the song of Thracian Orpheus drew  
 To Hebrus' margin, from their dreary seats,  
 The savage breed which Hæmus, wrapt in clouds,  
 Pangæus cold, and Rhodopean snows,  
 In blood and discord nurs'd, the soothing strain  
 Flow'd with enchantment through the ravish'd ear,  
 Their fierceness melted, and, amaz'd, they learn'd  
 The sacred laws of justice, which the bard  
 Mix'd with the music of his heav'nly string.

Meantime th' Arcadians, with inverted arms  
 And banners, sad and solemn, on their shields  
 The giant limbs of Clonius bore along,  
 To spread a gen'ral wo. The noble corse,  
 Dire spectacle of carnage, passing by  
 To those last honours which the dead partake,  
 Struck Dithyrambus. Swift his melted eye  
 Review'd Phraortes on the rock supine;  
 Then on the sage Demophilus he look'd  
 Intent, and spake.... 'My heart retains thy words.  
 This hour may witness how rapacious pow'r



The earth unpeoples. Clonius is no more.  
But he, by Greece lamented, will acquire  
A signal tomb. This gallant Persian, crush'd  
Beneath my fortune, bath'd in blood, still warm,  
May lie forgotten by his thankless king;  
Yet not by me neglected shall remain  
A naked corse.' The good old man replies....

' My gen'rous child, deserving that success  
Thy arm hath gain'd! When vital breath is fled,  
Our friends, our foes, are equal dust. Both claim  
The fun'ral passage to that future seat  
Of being, where no enmity revives.  
There Greek and Persian will together quaff  
In amaranthine bow'rs the cup of bliss  
Immortal. Him, thy valour slew on earth,  
In that bless'd region thou mayst find a friend.'

This said, the ready Thespians he commands  
To lift Phraortes from his bed of death,  
Th' empurpled rock. Outstretch'd, on targets broad,  
Sustain'd by hands late hostile, now humane,  
He follows Clonius to the fun'ral pyre.

A cave, not distant from the Phocian wall,  
Through Oeta's cloven side, had nature form'd,  
In spacious windings. This in moss she clad;  
O'er half the entrance, downward from the roots,  
She hung the shaggy trunks of branching firs,  
To heav'n's hot ray impervious. Near the mouth  
Relucent laurels spread before the sun  
A broad and vivid foliage. High above  
The bill was darken'd by a solemn shade,  
Diffus'd from ancient cedars. To this cave  
Diomedon, Demophilus resort,  
And Thespia's youth. A deep recess appears,  
Cool as the azure grot where Thetis sleeps  
Beneath the vaulted ocean. Whisper'd sounds  
Of waters, trilling from the riven stone  
To feed a fountain on the rocky floor,  
In purest streams o'erflowing to the sea,  
Allure the warriors, hot with toil and thirst,  
To this retreat serene. Against the sides  
Their disencumber'd hands repose their shields;  
The helms they loosen from their glowing cheeks;

Propt on their spears, they rest : when Agis brings  
From Lacedæmon's leader these commands....

‘ Leonidas recals you from your toils,  
Ye meritorious Grecians. You have reap'd  
The first bright harvest on the field of fame.  
Our eyes in wonder, from the Phocian wall,  
On your unequal'd deeds incessant gaz'd.’

To whom Plataea's chief.... ‘ Go, Agis, say  
To Lacedæmon's ruler, that, untir'd,  
Diomedon can yet exalt his spear,  
Nor feels the armour heavy on his limbs.  
Then shall I quit the contest? Ere he sinks,  
Shall not this early sun again behold  
The slaves of Xerxes tremble at my lance,  
Should they adventure on a fresh assault?’

To him the Thespian youth.... ‘ My friend, my guide  
To noble actions, since thy gen'rous heart,  
Intent on fame, disdains to rest, O grant  
I too thy glorious labours may partake,  
May learn once more to imitate thy deeds.  
Thou, gentlest Agis, Sparta's king entreat  
Not to command us from the field of war.’

‘ Yes, persevering heroes,’ he reply'd,  
‘ I will return, will Sparta's king entreat  
Not to command you from the field of war.’

Then interpos'd Demophilus.... ‘ O friend,  
Who lead'st to conquest brave Plataea's sons;  
Thou too, lov'd offspring of the dearest man,  
Who dost restore a brother to my eyes;  
My soul your magnanimity applauds:  
But, O reflect that unabating toil  
Subdues the mightiest! Valour will repine  
When the weak hand obeys the heart no more.  
Yet I declining through the weight of years,  
Will not assign a measure to your strength.  
If still you find your vigour undecay'd,  
Stay, and augment your glory. So, when time  
Casts from your whiten'd heads the helm aside,  
When in the temples your enfeebled arms  
Have hung their consecrated shields, the land  
Which gave you life, in her defence employ'd,  
Shall then by honours, doubled on your age,

Requite the gen'rous labours of your prime.  
 So spake the senior, and forsook the cave.  
 But from the fount Diomedon receives  
 Th' o'erflowing waters in his concave helm,  
 Addressing thus the genius of the stream....

' Whoe'er thou art, divinity unstain'd  
 Of this fair fountain, till unsparing Mars  
 Heap'd carnage round thee, bounteous are thy streams  
 To me, who ill repay thee. I again  
 Thy silver-gleaming current must pollute,  
 Which, mix'd with gore, shall tinge the Malian slime.'

He said, and lifted in his brimming casque  
 The bright refreshing moisture. Thus repairs  
 The spotted panther to Hydaspes' side,  
 Or eastern Indus, feasted on the blood  
 Of some torn deer, which nigh his cruel grasp  
 Had roam'd, unheeding, in the secret shade;  
 Rapacious o'er the humid brink he stoops,  
 And in the pure and fluid crystal cools  
 His reeking jaws. Meantime the Thespian's eye  
 Roves round the vaulted space; when sudden sounds  
 Of music, utter'd by melodious harps  
 And melting voices, distant, but in tones  
 By distance soften'd, while the echoes sigh'd  
 In lulling replication, fill the vault  
 With harmony. In admiration mute,  
 With nerves unbrac'd by rapture, he, entranc'd,  
 Stands like an eagle, when his parting plumes  
 The balm of sleep relaxes, and his wings  
 Fall from his languid side. Plataea's chief,  
 Observing, rous'd the warrior. ' Son of Mars,  
 Shall music's softness from thy bosom steal  
 The sense of glory? From his neighb'ring camp  
 Perhaps the Persian sends fresh nations down.  
 Soon in bright steel Thermopylæ will blaze.  
 Awake! Accustom'd to the clang of arms,  
 Intent on vengeance for invaded Greece,  
 My ear, my spirit, in this hour admit  
 No new sensation, nor a change of thought.'

The Thespian, starting from oblivious sloth  
 Of ravishment and wonder, quick reply'd....

' These sounds were more than human. Hark! Again!'

O honour'd friend, no adverse banner streams  
In sight. No shout proclaims the Persian freed  
From his late terror. Deeper let us plunge  
In this mysterious dwelling of the nymphs,  
Whose voices charm its gloom.' In smiles rejoin'd  
Diomedon.... 'I see thy soul enthrall'd.  
Me thou wouldst rank among th' unletter'd rout  
Of yon Barbarians, should I press thy stay.  
Time favours too. Till Agis be return'd  
We cannot act. Indulge thy eager search.  
Here will I wait, a sentinel unmov'd,  
To watch thy coming.' In exploring haste  
Th' impatient Thespian penetrates the cave.  
He finds it bounded by a steep ascent  
Of rugged steps; where, down the hollow rock,  
A modulation clear, distinct, and slow,  
In movement solemn, from a lyric string,  
Dissolves the stagnant air to sweet accord  
With these sonorous lays. Celestial maids!  
While, from our cliffs contemplating the war,  
We celebrate our heroes, O impart  
Orphëan magic to the pious strain!  
That from the mountain we may call the groves;  
Swift motion through these marble fragments breathe,  
To overleap the high Oetæan ridge,  
And crush the fell invaders of our peace.

The animated hero upward springs,  
Light as a kindled vapour, which, confin'd  
In subterranean cavities, at length  
Pervading, rives the surface, to enlarge  
The long imprison'd flame. Ascending soon,  
He sees, he stands abash'd, then rev'rent kneels..

An aged temple, with insculptur'd forms  
Of Jove's harmonious daughters, and a train  
Of nine bright virgins, round their priestess rang'd,  
Who stood in awful majesty, receive  
His unexpected feet. The song is hush'd.  
The measur'd movement on the lyric chord  
In faint vibration dies. The priestess sage,  
Whose elevated port and aspect rose  
To more than mortal dignity, her lyre  
Consigning graceful to attendant hands,

Looks with reproof. The loose, uncover'd hair  
Shades his inclining forehead; while a flush  
Of modest crimson dyes his youthful cheek.  
Her pensive visage softens to a smile  
On worth so blooming, which she thus accosts....

‘ I should reprove thee, inadvertent youth,  
Who, through the sole access by nature left  
To this pure mansion, with intruding steps  
Dost interrupt our lays. But rise. Thy sword  
Perhaps embellish'd that triumphant scene  
Which wak'd these harps to celebrating notes.  
What is the impress on thy warlike shield?’

‘ A golden eagle on my shield I bear,’  
Still bending low, he answers. She pursues....

‘ Art thou possessor of that glorious orb,  
By me distinguish'd in the late defeat  
Of Asia, driv'n before thee? Speak thy name.  
Who is thy sire? Where lies thy native seat?  
Com'st thou for glory to this fatal spot,  
Or from Barbarian violence to guard  
A parent's age, a spouse, and tender babes,  
Who call thee father?’ Humbly he again....

‘ I am of Thespia, Dithyrambus nam'd,  
The son of Harmatides. Snatch'd by fate,  
He to his brother, and my second sire,  
Demophilus, consign'd me. Thespia's sons  
By him are led. His dictates I obey;  
Him to resemble strive. No infant voice  
Calls me a father. To the nuptial vow  
I am a stranger, and among the Greeks  
The least entitled to thy partial praise.’

‘ None more entitled,’ interpos'd the dame.  
‘ Deserving hero! thy demeanour speaks,  
It justifies the fame, so widely spread,  
Of Harmatides' heir. O grace and pride  
Of that fair city, which the Muses love,  
Thee an accepted visitant I hail  
In this their ancient temple! Thou shalt view  
Their sacred haunts.’ Descending from the dome,  
She thus pursues.... ‘ First, know my youthful hours  
Were exercis'd in knowledge. Homer's Muse  
To daily meditation won my soul,

With my young spirit mix'd undying sparks  
Of her own rapture. By a father sage  
Conducted, cities, manners, men I saw,  
Their institutes and customs. I return'd.  
The voice of Locris call'd me to sustain  
The holy function here. Now throw thy sight  
Across that meadow, whose enliven'd blades  
Wave in the breeze, and glisten in the sun  
Behind the hoary fane. My bleating train  
Are nourish'd there, a spot of plenty, spar'd  
From this surrounding wilderness. Remark  
That fluid mirror, edg'd by shrubs and flow'rs;  
Shrubs of my culture, flow'rs by Iris dress'd.  
Nor pass that smiling concave in the hill,  
Whose pointed crags are soften'd to the sight  
By figs and grapes.' She pauses; while around  
His eye, delighted, roves; in more delight  
Soon to the spot returning, where she stood  
A deity in semblance, o'er the place  
Presiding awful, as Minerva wise,  
August like Juno, like Diana pure,  
But not more pure than fair. The beauteous lake,  
The pines wide-branching, falls of water clear,  
The multifarious glow on Flora's lap,  
Lose all attraction, as her gracious lips  
Resume their tale....' In solitude remote  
Here I have dwelt contemplative, serene.  
Oft through the rocks responsive to my lyre,  
Oft to th' Amphictyons in assembly full,  
When at this shrine their annual vows they pay,  
In measur'd declamation I repeat  
The praise of Greece, her liberty and laws.  
From me the hinds, who tend their wand'ring goats  
In these rude purlieus, modulate their pipes  
To smoother cadence. Justice from my tongue  
Dissensions calms, which ev'n in deserts rend  
Th' unquiet heart of man. Now furious war  
My careful thoughts engages, which delight  
To help the free, th' oppressor to confound.  
Thy feet auspicious fortune hither brings.  
In thee a noble messenger I find.  
Go, in these words Leonidas address....

"Melissa, priestess of the tuncful nine,  
By their behests invites thy honour'd feet  
To her divine abode. Thee, first of Greeks,  
To conference of high import she calls."

Th' obedient Thespian down the holy cave  
Returns. His swiftness suddenly prevents  
His friend's impatience, who salutes him thus....

'Let thy adventure be hereafter told.  
Look yonder. Fresh battalions from the camp  
File through the Phocian barrier, to construct  
Another phalanx, moving tow'r of war,  
Which scorns the strength of Asia. Let us arm;  
That, ready station'd in the glorions van,  
We may secure permission from the king  
There to continue, and renew the fight.'

That instant brings Megistias near the grot.  
To Sparta's phalanx his paternal hand  
Was leading Menalippus. Not unheard  
By Dithyrambus in their slow approach,  
The father warns a young and lib'ral mind....

'Sprung from a distant bonndary of Greece,  
A foreigner in Sparta, cherish'd there,  
Instructed, honour'd, not unworthy held  
To fight for Lacedæmon in her line  
Of discipline and valour, lo! my son,  
The hour is come to prove thy gen'rous heart;  
That in thy hand, not ill-intrusted, shine  
The spear and buckler, to maintain the cause  
Of thy protectress. Let thy mind recal  
Leonidas. On yonder bulwark plac'd,  
He overlooks the battle; he discerns  
The bold and fearful. May the gods I serve  
Grant me to hear Leonidas approve  
My son! No other boon my age implores.'

The augur paus'd. The animated cheek  
Of Menalippus glows. His eager look  
Demands the fight. This struck the tender sire,  
Who then with moisten'd eyes.... 'Remember too  
A father sees thy danger. Oh! my child,  
To me thy honour, as to thee, is dear;  
Yet court not death. By ev'ry filial tie,  
By all my fondness, all my cares, I sue!

Amid the conflict, or the warm pursuit,  
Still by the wise Dieneces abide,  
His prudent valour knows th' unerring paths  
Of glory. He admits thee to his side.  
He will direct thy ardour. Go.' They part.

Megistias, turning, is accosted thus  
By Dithyrambus....' Venerable seer,  
So may that son, whose merit I esteem,  
Whose precious head in peril I would die  
To guard, return in triumph to thy breast,  
As thou deliver'st to Laconia's king  
A high and solemn message. While anew  
The line is forming, from th' embattled field  
I must not stray, uncall'd. A sacred charge  
Through hallow'd lips will best approach the king.'

The Acarnanian in suspense remains  
And silence. Dithyrambus quick relates  
Melissa's words, describes the holy grot,  
Then quits th' instructed augur, and attends  
Diomedon's loud call. That fervid chief  
Was reassuming his distinguish'd arms,  
Which, as a splendid recompence, he bore  
From grateful Athens, for achievements bold,  
When he with brave Miltiades redeem'd  
Her domes from Asian flames. The sculptur'd helm  
Enclos'd his manly temples. From on high  
A four-fold plumage nodded; while beneath  
A golden dragon, with effulgent scales,  
Itself the crest, shot terror. On his arm  
He brac'd his buckler. Bord'ring on the rim,  
Gorgonian serpents twin'd. Within, the form  
Of Pallas, martial goddess, was emboss'd.  
Low at her feet the graceful tunic flow'd.  
Betwixt two griffins, on her helmet, sat  
A sphynx, with wings expanded; while the face  
Of dire Medusa on her breastplate frown'd.  
One hand supports a javelin, which confounds  
The pride of kings. The other leads along  
A blooming virgin, Victory, whose brow  
A wreath encircles. Laurels she presents;  
But from her shoulders all her plumes were shorn,  
In favour'd Athens ever now to rest.



This dread of Asia on his mighty arm  
Diomedon uprear'd. He snatch'd his lance,  
Then spake to Dithyrambus.... 'See, my friend,  
Alone, of all the Grecians who sustain'd  
The former onset, inexhausted stand  
Plataea's sons. They well may keep the field,  
Who with unslacken'd nerves endur'd that day  
Which saw ten myriads of Barbarians driv'n  
Back to their ships, and Athens left secure.  
Charge in our line. Amid the foremost rank  
Thy valour shall be plac'd, to share command,  
And ev'ry honour with Plataea's chief.'

He said no more, but tow'rd's the Grecian van,  
Impetuous, ardent, strode. Nor slow behind,  
The pride of Thespia, Dithyrambus mov'd,  
Like youthful Hermes in celestial arms;  
When lightly, graceful, with his feather'd feet,  
Along Scamander's flow'ry verge he pass'd  
To aid th' incens'd divinities of Greece  
Against the Phrygian tow'rs. Their eager haste  
Soon brings the heroes to th' embattling ranks,  
Whom thus the brave Diomedon exhorts....

'Not to contend, but vanquish, are ye come.  
Here, in the blood of fugitives, your spears  
Shall, unoppos'd, be stain'd. My valiant friends,  
But chief, ye men of Sparta, view that space,  
Where from the Malian gulph more distant rise  
Th' Oetæan rocks, and less confine the straits.  
There if we range, extending wide our front,  
An ampler scope to havock will be giv'n.'

To him Dienece. 'Plataean friend,  
Well dost thou counsel. On that wid'ning ground,  
Close to the mountain, place thy vet'ran files.  
Proportion'd numbers from thy right shall stretch  
Quite to the shore, in phalanx deep, like thine.  
The Spartans wedg'd in this contracted part,  
Will I contain. Behind me Alpheus waits  
With lighter bodies. Further back the line  
Of Locris forms a strong reserve.' He said.  
The diff'rent bands, confiding in his skill,  
Move on successive. The Plataeans first  
Against the hill are station'd. In their van

Is Dithyrambus rank'd. Triumphant joy  
Distends their bosoms, sparkles in their eyes.

‘ Bless'd be the great Diomedon,’ they shout,  
‘ Who brings another hero to our line.

Hail, Dithyrambus! Hail, illustrious youth!  
Had tender age permitted, thou hadst gain'd  
An early palm at Marathon.’ His post  
He takes. His gladness blushes on his cheek  
Amid the foremost rank. Around him crowd  
The long-try'd warriors. Their unnumber'd scars  
Discov'ring, they in ample phrase recount  
Their various dangers. He their wounds surveys  
In veneration, nor disdains to hear  
The oft-repeated tale. From Sparta's king  
Return'd, the gracious Agis these address'd....

‘ Leonidas salutes Plataea's chief,  
And Dithyrambus. To your swords he grants  
A further effort with Plataea's band,  
If yet by toil unconquer'd. But I see  
That all, unyielding, court the promis'd fight.  
Hail, glorious vet'rans! This signal day  
May your victorious arms augment the wreaths  
Around your venerable heads, and grace  
Thermopylae with Marathonian fame.’

This said, he hastens back. Meantime advance  
The Mantinean, Diophantus brave,  
Then Hegesander, Tegea's dauntless chief,  
Who near Diomedon, in equal range,  
Erect their standards. Next the Thebans form.  
Alcmaeon, bold Eupalamus, succeed,  
With their Corinthian and Phliasian bands.  
Last, on the Malian shore, Mycenæ's youth  
Aristobulus draws. From Oeta's side  
Down to the bay, in well-connected length,  
Each gleaming rank contains a hundred spears,  
While twenty bucklers ev'ry file condense.  
A sure support, Dienece behind  
Arrays the Spartans. Godlike Agis here,  
There Menalippus, by their leader stand,  
Two bulwarks. Breathing ardour in the rear,  
The words of Alpheus fan the growing flame  
Of expectation through his light-arm'd force;

While Polydorns, present in his thoughts,  
To vengeance sharpens his indignant soul.

No foe is seen. No distant shout is heard.  
This pause of action Dithyrambus chose.  
The solemn scene on Oeta to his friend  
He open'd large; pourtray'd Melissa's form,  
Reveal'd her mandate; when Plataea's chief....

'Such elevation of a female mind  
Bespeaks Melissa worthy to obtain  
The conference she asks. This wond'rous dame,  
Amid her hymns, conceives some lofty thought  
To make these slaves, who loiter in their camp,  
Dread ev'n our women. But my gentle friend,  
Say, Dithyrambus, whom the liquid spell  
Of song enchants, should I reproach the gods,  
Who form'd me cold to music's pleasing pow'r?  
Or should I thank them that the soft'ning charm  
Of sound or numbers ne'er dissolv'd my soul?  
Yet I confess thy valour breaks that charm,  
Which may enrapture, not unman thy breast.'

To whom his friend.... 'Doth he whose lays record  
The woes of Priam, and the Grecian fame,  
Doth he dissolve thy spirit? Yet he flows  
In all the sweetness harmony can breathe.'

'No, by the Gods,' Diomedon rejoins,  
'I feel that mighty muse. I see the car  
Of fierce Achilles, see th' encumber'd wheels  
O'er heroes driv'n, and clotted with their gore.  
Another too demands my soul's esteem,  
Brave Æschylus of Athens. I have seen  
His muse begirt by furies, while she swell'd  
Her tragic numbers. Him, in equal rage  
His country's foes o'erwhelming, I beheld  
At Marathon. If Phœbus would diffuse  
Such fire through ev'ry bard, the tuneful band  
Might in themselves find heroes for their songs.  
But, son of Harmatides, lift thine eye  
To yonder point, remotest in the bay.  
Those seeming clouds, which o'er the billows fleet  
Successive round the jutting land, are sails.  
Th' Athenian pendant hastens to salute  
Leonidas. O Æschylus, my friend,

First in the train of Phœbus and of Mars,  
Be thou on board ! Swift-bounding o'er the waves,  
Come, and be witness to heroic deeds !  
Brace thy strong harp with loftier-sounding chords,  
To celebrate this battle ! Fall who may ;  
But if they fall with honour, let their names  
Round festive goblets in thy numbers ring,  
And joy, not grief, accompany the song.'

Conversing thus, their courage they beguil'd,  
Which else, impatient of inactive hours,  
At long-suspended glory, had repin'd.

# LEONIDAS.

*BOOK VII.*

## The Argument.

*Megistias delivers Melissa's message to Leonidas. Medon, her brother, conducts him to the Temple. She furnishes Leonidas with the means of executing a design he had premeditated to annoy the enemy. They are joined by a body of mariners under the command of Æschylus, a celebrated poet and warrior among the Athenians. Leonidas takes the necessary measures; and observing, from a summit of Oeta, the motions of the Persian army, expects another attack: this is renewed with great violence by Hyperanthes, Abrocomes, and the principal Persian leader at the head of some chosen troops.*

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK VII.

**M**EGISTIAS, urging to unwonted speed  
His aged steps, by Dithyrambus charg'd  
With sage Melissa's words, had now rejoin'd  
The king of Lacedæmon. At his side  
Was Maron posted, watchful to receive  
His high injunctions. In the rear they stood  
Behind two thousand Locrians, deep array'd  
By warlike Medon, from Oileus sprung.  
Leonidas to them his anxious mind  
Was thus disclosing.... 'Medon, Maron, hear.  
From this low rampart my exploring eye  
But half commands the action, yet hath mark'd  
Enough for caution. Yon barbarian camp,  
Immense, exhaustless, deluging the ground  
With myriads, still o'erflowing, may consume,  
By endless numbers and unceasing toil,  
The Grecian strength. Not marble is our flesh,  
Nor adamant our sinews. Silvan pow'rs,  
Who dwell on Oeta, your superior aid  
We must solicit. Your stupendous cliffs,  
In those loose rocks and branchless trunks, contain  
More fell annoyance than the arm of man.'

He ended; when Megistias.... 'Virtuous king,  
Melissa, priestess of the tuneful nine,  
By their behests, invites thy honour'd feet  
To her chaste dwelling, seated on that hill.  
To conference of high import she calls  
Thee, first of Grecians.' Medon interpos'd....

'She is my sister. Justice rules her ways  
With piety and wisdom. To her voice  
The nations round give ear. The muses breathe  
Their inspiration through her spotless soul,  
Which borders on divinity. She calls

On thee. O, truly styl'd the first of Greeks,  
 Regard her call! Yon cliff's projecting head  
 To thy discernment will afford a scope  
 More full, more certain; thence thy skilful eye  
 Will best direct the fight. Melissa's sire  
 Was ever present to the king in thought,  
 Who thus to Medon.... 'Lead, Oileus' son:  
 Before the daughter of Oileus place  
 My willing feet.' They hasten to the cave.  
 Megistias, Maron, follow. Through the rock  
 Leonidas, ascending to the fane,  
 Rose, like the God of morning from the cell  
 Of night, when, shedding cheerfulness and day  
 On hill and vale, emblaz'd with dewy gems,  
 He gladdens nature. Lacedæmon's king,  
 Majestically graceful and serene,  
 Disperses the rigour in that solemn seat  
 Of holy sequestration. On the face  
 Of pensive-ey'd religion rapture glows,  
 In admiration of the godlike man.  
 Advanc'd Melissa. He her proffer'd hand,  
 In hue, in purity, like snow, receiv'd.  
 A heav'n-illumin'd dignity of look  
 On him she fix'd. Rever'd by all, she spake....

'Hail, chief of men, selected by the gods  
 For purer fame than Hercules acquir'd!  
 This hour allows no pause.' She leads the king,  
 With Medon, Maron, and Megistias, down  
 A slope, declining to the mossy verge  
 Which terminates the mountain. While they pass  
 She thus proceeds.... 'These marble masses view,  
 Which lie dispers'd around you. They were hewn  
 From yonder quarry. Note those pond'rous beams,  
 The silvan offspring of that bill. With these,  
 At my request, th' Amphictyons, from their seat  
 Of gen'ral council, piously decreed  
 To raise a dome, the ornament of Greece.  
 Observe those wither'd firs, those mould'ring oaks,  
 Down that declivity, half-rooted, bent,  
 Inviting human force. Then look below,  
 There lies Thermopyke.'.... 'I see,' exclaims  
 The high-conceiving hero. 'I recal



Thy father's words and forecast. He presag'd  
 I should not find his daughter's counsel vain.  
 He, to accomplish what thy wisdom plans,  
 Hath amplest means supply'd. Go, Medon, bring  
 The thousand prasants, from th' Oilean vale  
 Detach'd. Their leader, Melibæus, bring.  
 Fly, Maron. Ev'ry instrument provide  
 To fell the trees, to drag the massy beams,  
 To lift the broad-hewn fragments.'....' Are not these  
 For sacred use reserv'd? Megistias said.  
 ' Can these be wielded by the hand of Mars  
 Without pollution? In a solemn tone  
 The priestess answer'd....' Rev'rend maîr, who bear'st  
 Pontife wreaths, and thou, great captain, hear.  
 Forbear to think that my unprompted mind,  
 Calm and sequester'd in religion's peace,  
 Could have devis'd a stratagem of war;  
 Or, unpermitted, could resign to Mars  
 These rich materials, gather'd to restore,  
 In strength and splendour, yon decrepit walls,  
 And that time-shaken roof. Rejecting sleep,  
 Last night I lay, contriving swift revenge  
 On these Barbarians, whose career profane  
 O'erturns the Grecian temples, and devotes  
 Their holy bow'rs to flames. I left my couch  
 Long ere the sun his orient gates unbarr'd.  
 Beneath yon beach my pensive head reclin'd.  
 The rivulets, the fountains, warbling round,  
 Attracted slumber. In a dream I saw  
 Calliopé. Her sisters, all with harps,  
 Were rang'd around her; as their Parian forms  
 Shew in the temple. " Dost thou sleep?" she said;  
 " Melissa, dost thou sleep? The barb'rous host  
 Approaches Greece. The first of Grecians comes,  
 By death to vanquish. Priestess, let him hurl  
 These marble heaps, these consecrated beams,  
 Our fane itself, to crush the impious ranks.  
 The hero summon to our sacred hill.  
 Reveal the promis'd succour. All is due  
 To liberty against a tyrant's pride."  
 She struck her shell. In concert full reply'd  
 The sister lyres. Leonidas they sung,

In ev'ry note and dialect yet known,  
In measures new, in language yet to come.'

She finish'd. Then Megistias.... 'Dear to heav'n,  
By nations honour'd, and, in tow'ring thought,  
O'er either sex pré-eminent, thy words  
To me, a soldier and a priest, suffice.  
I hesitate no longer.' But the king,  
Wrapt in ecstatic contemplation, stood,  
Revolving deep an answer, which might suit  
His dignity and hers. At length he spake....

'Not Lacedæmon's whole collected state  
Of senate, people, ephori, and kings;  
Not the Amphictyons, whose convention holds  
The universal majesty of Greece,  
E'er drew such rev'rence as thy single form,  
O, all-surpassing woman, worthy child  
Of time-renown'd Oileus! In thy voice  
I hear the goddess Liberty. I see,  
In thy sublimity of look and port,  
That daughter bright of Eleutherian Jove.  
Me thou hast prais'd. My conscious spirit feels  
That not to triumph in thy virtuous praise  
Were want of virtue. Yet, illustrious dame,  
Were I assur'd that oracles delude;  
That, unavailing, I should spill my blood;  
That all the Muses of subjected Greece  
Hereafter would be silent, and my name  
Be ne'er transmitted to recording time;  
There is in virtue, for her sake alone,  
What should uphold my resolution firm.  
My country's laws I never would survive.'

Mov'd at his words, reflecting on his fate,  
She had relax'd her dignity of mind,  
Had sunk in sadness; but her brother's helm  
Before her beams. Relumining her night,  
He through the cave, like Hesperus, ascends,  
Th' Oilcan hinds conducting, to achieve  
The enterprise she counsels. Now her ear  
Is pierc'd by notes, shrill sounding from the vault.  
Upstarts a diff'rent band, alert and light,  
Athenian sailors. Long and sep'rate files  
Of lusty shoulders, cas'd by union, bear

Thick, well-compacted cables, wont to heave  
 The restiff anchor. To a naval pipe,  
 As if one soul invigorated all,  
 And all compos'd one body, they had trod  
 In equal paces, mazy, yet unbroke,  
 Throughout their passage. So the spinal strength  
 Of some portentous serpent, whom the heats  
 Of Libya breed, indissolubly knit,  
 But flexible, across the sandy plain,  
 Or up the mountain, draws his spotted length,  
 Or where a winding excavation leads  
 Through rocks abrupt and wild. Of stature large,  
 In arms, which shew'd simplicity of strength,  
 No decoration of redundant art,  
 With sable horse-hair floating down his back,  
 A warrior moves behind. Compos'd in gait,  
 Austerely grave and thoughtful, on his shield  
 The democratic majesty he bore  
 Of Athens. Carv'd in emblematic brass,  
 Her image stood, with Pallas by her side,  
 And trampled under each victorious foot  
 A regal crown, one Persian, one usurpt  
 By her own tyrants, on the well-fought plain  
 Of Marathon confounded. He commands  
 These future guardians of their country's weal,  
 Of gen'ral Greece the bulwarks. Their high deeds  
 From Artemisium, from th' empurpled shores  
 Of Salamis, renown shall echo wide;  
 Shall tell posterity, in latest times,  
 That naval fortitude controls the world.  
 Swift Maron, following, brings a vig'rous band  
 Of Helots. Ev'ry instrument they wield  
 To delve, to hew, to heave: and, active, last  
 Bounds Melibœus, vigilant to urge  
 The tardy forward. To Laconia's king  
 Advanc'd th' Athenian leader, and began....  
 'Thou godlike ruler of Eurotas, hail!  
 Thee by my voice Themistocles salutes,  
 The admiral of Athens. I conduct,  
 By public choice, the squadron of my tribe.  
 And Æschylus am call'd. Our chief hath giv'n  
 Three days to glory on Eubœa's coast,

Whose promontories almost rise to meet  
 Thy ken from Oeta's cliffs. This morning saw  
 The worsted foe, from Artemisium driv'n,  
 Leave their disabled ships, and floating wrecks,  
 For Grecian trophies. When the fight was clos'd  
 I was detach'd to bring th' auspicious news,  
 To bid thee welcome. Fortunate, my keel  
 Hath swiftly borne me. Joyful I concur  
 In thy attempt. Appris'd by yonder chiefs,  
 Who met me landing, instant from the ships  
 A thousand gallant mariners I drew,  
 Who till the setting sun shall lend their toil.'

'Themistocles and thou accept my heart,'  
 Leonidas reply'd, and closely strain'd  
 The brave, the learn'd Athenian to his breast.  
 'To envy is ignoble; to admire  
 The activity of Athens will become  
 A king of Sparta, who, like thee, condemn'd  
 His country's sloth. But Sparta now is arm'd.  
 Thou shalt commend. Behold me, station'd here  
 To watch the wild vicissitudes of war,  
 Direct the course of slaughter. To this post  
 By that superior woman I was call'd.  
 By long protracted fight lest fainting Greece  
 Should yield, outnumber'd, my enlighten'd soul  
 Through her, whom heav'n enlightens, hath devis'd  
 To whelm the num'rous, persevering foe  
 In hideous death, and signalize the day  
 With horrors new to war. The Muses prompt  
 The bright achievement. Lo! from Athens smiles  
 Minerva too. Her swift, auspicious aid  
 In thee we find, and these, an ancient race,  
 By her and Neptune cherish'd.' Straight he meets  
 The gallant train; majestic, with his arms  
 Outstretch'd, in this applauding strain he spake....

'O lib'ral people, earliest arm'd, to shield  
 Not your own Athens more than gen'ral Greece,  
 You best deserve her gratitude. Her praise  
 Will rank you foremost on the rolls of fame.'

They hear, they gaze, revering, and rever'd.  
 Fresh numbers muster, rushing from the hills,  
 The thickets round. Melissa, pointing, spake....

' I am their leader. Natives of the hills  
 Are these, the rural worshippers of Pan,  
 Who breathes an ardour through their humble minds  
 To join you warriors. Vassals these, not mine,  
 But of the Muses, and their hallow'd laws,  
 Administer'd by me. Their patient hands  
 Make culture smile, where nature seems to chide;  
 Nor wanting my instructions, or my pray'rs,  
 Fertility they scatter, by their toil,  
 Around this aged temple's wild domain.  
 Is Melibœus here? Thon fence secure  
 To old Oileus from the cares of time,  
 Thrice art thou welcome! Useful, wise, belov'd,  
 Where'er thou sojournest, on Oeta known,  
 As oft a bounty of a father's love  
 Thou on Melissa's solitude dost pour,  
 Be thou director of these mountain hinds!

Th' important labour, to inspiring airs,  
 From flutes and harps, in symphony, with hymns  
 Of holy virgins, ardent all perform,  
 In bands divided under diff'rent chiefs.  
 Huge timbers, blocks of marble, to remove  
 They first attempted; then assembled stones,  
 Loose in their beds, and wither'd trunks, uproot  
 By tempests; next dismember'd from the rock  
 Broad, rugged fragments; from the mountain hew'd  
 Their venerable firs and aged oaks,  
 Which, of their branches by the lightning bar'd,  
 Presented still against the blasting flame  
 Their hoary pride, unshaken. These the Greeks,  
 But chief th' Athenian mariners, to force  
 Uniting skill with massy leavers heave,  
 With strong-knit cables drag; till, now dispos'd  
 Where great Leonidas appoints, the piles  
 Nod o'er the straits. This new and sudden scene  
 Might lift imagination to belief  
 That Orpheus and Amphion from their beds  
 Of ever-blooming asphodel had heard  
 The Muses call; had brought their fabled harps,  
 At whose mellifluent charm once more the trees  
 Had burst their fibrous bands, and marbles leap'd  
 In rapid motion from the quarry's womb,

That day to follow harmony, in aid  
Of gen'rous valour. Fancy might discern  
Cerulean Thetis, from her coral grot  
Emerging, seated on her pearly car,  
With Nereids, floating on the surge below,  
To view, in wonder, from the Malian bay  
The attic sons of Neptune, who forsook  
Their wooden walls to range th' Oetæan crags,  
To rend the forests, and disjoin the rocks.

Meantime a hundred sheep are slain. Their limbs  
From burning piles fume grateful. Bounty spreads  
A decent board. Simplicity attends.  
Then spake the priestess.... 'Long enduring chiefs,  
Your efforts, now accomplish'd, may admit  
Refection, due to this hard-labour'd train,  
Due to yourselves.' Her hospitable smile  
Wins her well-chosen guests, Laconia's king,  
Her brother, Maron, Æschylus divine,  
With Acarnania's priest. Her first commands  
To Melibœus, sedulous and blithe,  
Distribute plenty through the toiling crowd.  
Then, screen'd beneath close umbrage of an oak,  
Each care-divested chief the banquet shares.

Cool breezes, whisp'ring, flutter in the leaves,  
Whose verdure, pendant in an arch, repel  
The west'ring sun's hot glare. Favonius bland  
His breath impregnates with exhaling sweets  
From flow'ry beds, whose scented clusters deck  
The gleaming pool in view. Fast by a brook,  
In limpid lampses, over native steps  
Attunes his cadence to sonorous strings,  
And liquid accents of Melissa's maids.  
The floating air in melody respires.  
A rapture mingles in the calm repast.  
Uprises Æschylus. A goblet full  
He grasps.... 'To those divinities who dwell  
In yonder temple, this libation first;  
To thee, benignant hostess, next I pour;  
Then to thy fame, Leonidas.' He said.  
His breast, with growing heat distended, prompts  
His eager hand, to whose expressive sign  
One of the virgins ceases her sacred lyre.

Their choral song complacency restrains.  
The soul of music, bursting from his touch,  
At once gives birth to sentiment sublime.

‘O Hercules and Perseus,’ he began,  
‘Star-spangled twins of Leda, and the rest  
Of Jove’s immediate seed, your splendid acts  
Mankind protected while the race was rude;  
While o’er the earth’s unciviliz’d extent  
The savage monster and the ruffian sway’d,  
More savage still. No policy, nor laws,  
Had fram’d societies. By single strength  
A single ruffian or a monster fell.  
The legislator rose. Three lights in Greece,  
Lycurgus, Solon, and Zaleucus, blaz’d.  
Then, substituting wisdom, Jove, profuse  
Of his own blood no longer, gave us more  
In discipline and manners, which can form  
A hero like Leonidas, than all  
The god-begotten progeny before.  
The pupils next of Solon claim the muse.  
Sound your hoarse conchs, ye Tritons. You beheld  
The Atlantéan shape of slaughter wade  
Through your astonish’d deeps, his purple arm  
Uplifting high before th’ Athenian line.  
You saw bright conquest riding on the gale  
Which swell’d their sails; saw terror at their helms,  
To guide their brazen beaks on Asia’s pride.  
Her adamantine grapple from their decks  
Fate threw, and ruin on the hostile fleet  
Inextricably fasten’d. Sound, ye nymphs  
Of Oeta’s mountains, of her woods and streams,  
Who hourly witness to Melissa’s worth,  
Ye Oreads, Dryads, Naiads, sound her praise!  
Proclaim Zaleucus by his daughter grac’d,  
Like Solon and Lycurgus by their sons.’

Laconia’s hero, and the priestess, bow’d  
Their foreheads grateful to the bard sublime.  
She, rising, takes the word.... ‘More sweet thy lyre  
To friendship’s ear than terrible to foes  
Thy spear in battle, though the keenest point  
Which ever pierc’d Barbarians. Close we here

The song and banquet. Hark! a distant din  
From Asia's camp requires immediate care!"

She leads. Along the rocky verge they pass.  
In calm delight, Leonidas surveys  
All in the order which he last assign'd,  
As o'er Thermopylæ beneath he cast  
A wary look. The mountain's furthest crag  
Now reach'd, Melissa to the king began....

'Observe that space below, dispers'd in dales,  
In hollows, winding through dissever'd rocks.  
The slender outlet, screen'd by yonder shrubs,  
Leads to the pass. There stately, to my view  
The martial queen of Caria, yester sun  
Descending shew'd. Her loudly I reprov'd.  
But she, devoted to the Persian king,  
In ambush there preserv'd his flying host.  
She last retreated; but, retreating, prov'd  
Her valour equal to a better cause.  
Again I see the heroine approach.'

Megistias then....' I see a pow'rful arm,  
Sustaining firm the large, emblazon'd shield,  
Which, fashion'd first in Caria, we have learn'd  
To imitate in Greece. Sublime, her port  
Bespeaks a mighty spirit. Priestess, look.  
An act of piety she now performs,  
Directing those, perhaps her Carian band,  
To bear dead brethren from the bloody field.  
Among the horsemen an exalted form,  
Like Demaratus, strikes my searching eye.  
To me, recalling his transcendent rank  
In Sparta once, he seems a languid sun,  
Which dimly sinks in exhalations dark,  
Enveloping his radiance.' While he spake,  
Intent on martial duty, Medon views  
The dang'rous thicket; Lacedæmon's chief,  
Around the region his consid'rate eye  
Extending, marks each movement of the foe.

'Th' imperial Persian, from his lofty car,  
Had, in the morning's early conflict, seen  
His vanquish'd army pouring from the straits  
Back to their tents, and o'er his camp dispers'd



In consternation; as a river bursts  
Impetuous from his fountain, then, enlarg'd,  
Spreads a dead surface o'er some level marsh.  
Th' astonish'd king thrice started from his seat;  
Shame, fear, and indignation rent his breast;  
As ruin irresistible were near  
To overwhelm his millions. 'Haste!' he call'd  
To Hyperanthes, 'haste, and meet the Greeks.  
Their daring rage, their insolence, repel.  
From such dishonour vindicate our name.'

His royal brother through th' extensive camp  
Obedient mov'd. Deliberate and brave,  
Each active prince, from ev'ry tent remote,  
The hardiest troops, he summon'd. Caria's queen,  
To Hyperanthes bound by firm esteem  
Of worth, unrivall'd in the Persian court,  
In solemn pace was now returning slow  
Before a band, transporting from the field  
Their slain companions to the sandy beach.

She stopt, and thus address'd him. 'Learn, O prince  
From one whose wishes on thy merit wait,  
The only means to bind thy gallant brow  
In fairest wreaths. To break the Grecian line  
In vain ye struggle, unarray'd and lax,  
Depriv'd of union. Try to form one band  
In order'd ranks, and emulate the foe.  
Nor to secure a thicket next the pass  
Forget. Selected numbers station there.  
Farewell, young hero! May thy fortune prove  
Unlike to mine. Had Asia's millions spar'd  
One myriad to sustain me, none had seen  
Me quit the dang'rous contest. But the head  
Of base Argestes on some future day  
Shall feel my treasur'd vengeance. From the fleet  
I only stay till burial rites are paid  
To these dead Carians. On this fatal strand  
May Artemisia's grief appease your ghosts,  
My faithful subjects, sacrific'd in vain.'

The hero grateful and respectful heard  
What soon his warmth neglected, at the sight  
Of spears which flam'd innumerable round.  
Beyond the rest in lustre was a band,

The satellites of Xerxes. They forsook  
 Their constant orbit round th' imperial throne  
 At this dread crisis. To a myriad fix'd,  
 From their unchanging number they deriv'd  
 The title of immortals. Light their spears;  
 Set in pomegranates of resplendent gold,  
 Or burnish'd silver, were the slender blades.  
 Magnificent and stately were the ranks.  
 The prince, commanding mute attention, spake....

‘ In two divisions part your number, chiefs.  
 One will I lead to onset. In my ranks  
 Abrocomes, Hydarnes, shall advance,  
 Pandates, Mindus, Intaphernes brave,  
 To wrest this short-liv'd victory from Greece.  
 Thou, Abradates, by Sosarmes join'd,  
 Orontes and Mazæus, keep the rest  
 From action. Future succour they must lend,  
 Should envious fate exhaust our num'rous files;  
 For, O pure Mithra, may thy radiant eye  
 Ne'er see us, yielding to ignoble flight,  
 The Persian name dishonour. May the acts  
 Of our renown'd progenitors, who, led  
 By Cyrus, gave one monarch to the east,  
 In us revive. O think, ye Persian lords,  
 What endless infamy will blast your names,  
 Should Greece, that narrow portion of the earth,  
 Your pow'r defy; when Babylon hath low'r'd  
 Her tow'ring crest; when Lydia's pride is quell'd  
 In Cræsus vanquish'd; when her empire lost  
 Ecbatana deplores! Ye chosen guard,  
 Your king's immortal bulwark, O reflect  
 What deeds from your superior swords he claims!  
 You share his largest bounty. To your faith,  
 Your constancy and prowess, he commits  
 His throne, his person, and this day his fame!’

They wave their banners, blazing in the sun,  
 Who then three hours tow'rd Hesperus had driv'n  
 From his meridian height. Amid their shouts  
 The hoarse-resounding billows are not heard.  
 Of diff'rent nations, and in diff'rent garb,  
 Innumerable and vary'd, like the shells  
 By restless Thetis scatter'd on the beach

O'er which they trod, the multitude advanc'd,  
Straight by Leonidas descri'd. The van  
Abrocomes and Hyperanthes led,  
Pandates, Mindus. Violent their march  
Sweeps down the rocky, hollow-sounding pass.  
So, where th' unequal globe in mountains swells,  
A torrent rolls his thund'ring surge between  
The steep-erected cliffs; tumultuous dash  
The waters, bursting on the pointed crags;  
The valley roars: the marble channel foams.  
Th' undaunted Greeks immoveably withstand  
The dire encounter. Soon th' impetuous shock  
Of thousands and of myriads shakes the ground.  
Stupendous scene of terror! Under hills,  
Whose sides half-arching o'er the hosts project,  
The unabating fortitude of Greece  
Maintains her line; th' untrain'd Barbarians charge  
In savage fury. With inverted trunks,  
Or bent obliquely from the shagg'd ridge,  
The silvan horrors overshadow the fight.  
The clanging trump, the crash of mingled spears,  
The groan of death, and war's discordant shouts,  
Alarm the echoes in their neighb'ring caves;  
Woods, cliffs, and shores, return the dreadful sound.



# LEONIDAS.

*BOOK VIII.*

## The Argument.

*Hyperanthes discontinuing the fight while he waits for reinforcements, Teribazus, a Persian remarkable for his merit and learning, and highly beloved by Hyperanthes, but unhappy in his passion for Ariana, a daughter of Darius, advances from the rest of the army to the rescue of a friend in distress, who lay wounded on the field of battle. Teribazus is attacked by Diophantus, the Mantinean, whom he overcomes; then, engaging with Dithyrambus, is himself slain. Hyperanthes hastens to his succour. A general battle ensues, where Diomedon distinguishes his valour. Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, partly by their own efforts, and partly by the perfidy of the Thebans, who desert the line, being on the point of forcing the Grecians, are repulsed by the Lacedæmonians. Hyperanthes composes a select body out of the Persian standing forces, and making an improvement in their discipline, renews the attack; upon which Leonidas changes the disposition of his army. Hyperanthes and the ablest Persian generals are driven out of the field, and several thousands of the Barbarians, circumvented in the pass, are entirely destroyed.*

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK VIII.

**A**MID the van of Persia was a youth,  
Nam'd Teribazus; not for golden stores;  
Not for wide pastures, travers'd o'er by herds,  
By fleece abounding sheep, or gen'rous steeds,  
Nor yet for pow'r, nor splendid honours, fam'd.  
Rich was his mind in ev'ry art divine;  
Through ev'ry path of science had he walk'd,  
The votary of wisdom. In the years  
When tender down invests the ruddy cheek,  
He with the Magi turn'd the hallow'd page  
Of Zoroastres. Then his tow'ring thoughts  
High on the plumes of contemplation soar'd.  
He, from the lofty Babylonian fane,  
With learn'd Chaldeans trac'd the heav'nly sphere;  
There number'd o'er the vivid fires which gleam  
On night's bespangled bosom. Nor unheard  
Were Indian sages from sequester'd bow'rs,  
While on the banks of Ganges they disclos'd  
The pow'rs of nature, whether in the woods,  
The fruitful glebe, or flow'r, the healing plant,  
The limpid waters, or the ambient air,  
Or in the purer element of fire.  
The realm of old Sesostris next he view'd,  
Mysterious Egypt, with her hidden rites  
Of Isis and Osiris. Last he sought  
Th' Ionian Greeks, from Athens sprung; nor pass'd  
Miletus by, which once in rapture heard  
The tongue of Thales; nor Priene's walls,  
Where wisdom dwelt with Bias; nor the seat  
Of Pittacus, rever'd on Lesbian shores.  
Th' enlighten'd youth to Susa now return'd,  
Place of his birth. His merit soon was dear  
To Hyperanthes. It was now the time

That discontent and murmur on the banks  
Of Nile were loud and threat'ning. Chembes there  
The only faithful stood, a potent lord,  
Whom Xerxes held by promis'd nuptial ties  
With his own blood. To this Egyptian prince  
Bright Ariana was the destin'd spouse,  
From the same bed with Hyperanthes born.  
Among her guards was Teribazus nam'd  
By that fond brother, tender of her weal.

Th' Egyptian boundaries they gain. They hear  
Of insurrection, of the Pharian tribes  
In arms, and Chembes in the tumult slain.  
They pitch their tents, at midnight are assail'd,  
Surpris'd, their leaders massacred, the slaves  
Of Ariana captives borne away,  
Her own pavilion fore'd, her person seiz'd  
By ruffian hands; when timely, to redeem  
Her and th' invaded camp from further spoil,  
Flies Teribazus with a rally'd band,  
Swift on her chariot seats the royal fair,  
Nor waits the dawn. Of all her menial train  
None but three female slaves are left. Her guide,  
Her comforter and guardian, fate provides  
In him, distinguish'd by his worth alone,  
No prince, nor satrap, now the single chief  
Of her surviving guard. Of regal birth,  
But with excelling graces in her soul,  
Unlike an eastern princess, she inclines  
To his consoling, his instructive, tongue  
An humbled ear. Amid the converse sweet,  
Her charms, her mind, her virtues, he explores,  
Admiring. Soon his admiration chang'd  
To love; nor loves he sooner than despairs.  
From morn to ev'n her passing wheels he guards  
Back to Euphrates. Often, as she mounts  
Or quits the car, his arm her weight sustains  
With trembling pleasure. His assiduous hand  
From purest fountains wafts the living flood.  
Nor seldom, by the fair one's soft command  
Would he repose him, at her feet reclin'd;  
While o'er his lips her lovely forehead bow'd,  
Won by his grateful eloquence, which sooth'd



With sweet variety the tedious march,  
Beguiling time. He too would then forget  
His pains awhile, in raptures vain entranc'd;  
Delusion all, the fleeting rays of joy,  
Soon overcast by more intense despair.  
Like wintry clouds, which, op'ning for a time,  
Tinge their black folds with gleams of scatter'd light,  
Then, swiftly closing, on the brow of morn  
Condense their horrors, and in thickest gloom  
The ruddy beauty veil. They now approach  
The tow'r of Belus. Hyperanthes leads  
Through Babylon an army to chastize  
The crime of Ægypt. Teribazus here  
Parts from his princess, marches bright in steel  
Beneath his patron's banner, gathers palms  
On conquer'd Nile. To Susa he returns,  
To Ariana's residence, and bears  
Deep in his heart th' inmedicable wound.  
But unreveal'd and silent was his pain;  
Nor yet in solitary shades he roam'd,  
Nor shun'd resort: but o'er his sorrows cast  
A sickly dawn of gladness, and in smiles  
Conceal'd his anguish; while the secret flame  
Rag'd in his bosom, and its peace consum'd,  
His soul still brooding o'er these mournful thoughts....

‘ Can I, O Wisdom, find relief in thee,  
Who dost approve my passion? From the snares  
Of beauty only thou wouldst guard my heart.  
But here thyself art charm'd; where softness, grace,  
And ev'ry virtue, dignify desire.  
Yet thus to love, despairing to possess,  
Of all the torments, by relentless fate  
On life inflicted, is the most severe.  
Do I not feel thy warnings in my breast,  
That flight alone can save me? I will go  
Back to the learn'd Chaldæans, on the banks  
Of Ganges seek the sages; where to heav'n  
With thee my elevated soul shall tow'r.  
O wretched Teribazus! all conspires  
Against thy peace. Our mighty lord prepares  
To overwhelm the Grecians. Ev'ry youth  
Is call'd to war; and I, who lately pois'd

With no inglorious arm the soldier's lance,  
 Who near the side of Hyperanthes fought,  
 Must join the throng. How therefore can I fly  
 From Ariana, who with Asia's queens  
 The splendid camp of Xerxes must adorn?  
 Then be it so. Again I will adore  
 Her gentle virtues. Her delightful voice,  
 Her gracious sweetness, shall again diffuse  
 Resistless magic through my ravish'd heart;  
 Till passion, thus with double rage inflam'd,  
 Swells to distraction in my tortur'd breast:  
 Then....but in vain through darkness do I search  
 My fate....Despair and fortune be my guides!

The day arriv'd when Xerxes first advanc'd  
 His arms from Susa's gates. The Persian dames,  
 So were accustom'd all the eastern fair,  
 In sumptuous cars accompany'd his march;  
 A beauteous train, by Ariana grac'd.  
 Her Teribazus follows, on her wheels  
 Attends and pines. Such woes oppress the youth,  
 Oppress, but not enervate. From the van  
 He in this second conflict had withstood  
 The threat'ning frown of adamantine Mars;  
 He singly, while his bravest friends recoil'd.  
 His manly temples no tiara bound.  
 The slender lance of Asia he disdain'd,  
 And her light target. Eminent he tow'r'd  
 In Grecian arms the wonder of his foes;  
 Among th' Ionians were his strenuous limbs  
 Train'd in the gymnic school. A fulgent casque  
 Enclos'd his head. Before his face and chest,  
 Down to the knees, an ample shield was spread.  
 A pond'rous spear he shook. The well-aim'd point  
 Sent two Phliasians to the realms of death,  
 With four Tegæans; whose indignant chief,  
 Brave Hegesander, vengeance breath'd in vain,  
 With streaming wounds repuls'd. Thus far, unmatched  
 His arm prevail'd; when Hyperanthes call'd  
 From fight his fainting legions. Now each band  
 Their languid courage reinforc'd by rest.  
 Meantime with Teribazus thus conferr'd  
 Th' applauding prince....'Thou much deserving youth,

Had twenty warriors in the dang'rous van  
Like thee maintain'd the onset, Greece had wept  
Her prostrate ranks. The weary'd fight awhile  
I now relax, till Abradates strong,  
Orontes and Mazæus, are advanc'd.  
Then to the conflict will I give no pause.  
If not by prowess, yet by endless toil  
Successive numbers shall exhaust the foe.'

He said. Immers'd in sadness, scarce reply'd,  
But to himself complain'd, the am'rous youth.

' Still do I languish, mourning o'er the fame  
My arm acquires. Tormented heart! thou seat  
Of constant sorrow, what deceitful smiles  
Yet canst thou borrow from unreal hope  
To flatter life? At Ariana's feet  
What if with-supplicating knees I bow,  
Implore her pity, and reveal my love.  
Wretch! canst thou climb to yon refulgent orb,  
And share the splendours which irradiate heav'n?  
Dost thou aspire to that exalted maid,  
Great Xerxes' sister, rivalling the claim  
Of Asia's proudest potentates and kings?  
Unless within her bosom I inspir'd  
A passion fervent as my own, nay more,  
Such as, dispelling ev'ry virgin fear,  
Might, unrestrain'd, disclose its fond desire,  
My love is hopeless; and her willing hand,  
Should she bestow it, draws from Asia's lord  
On both perdition.' By despair benumb'd,  
His limbs their action lose. A wish for death  
O'ercasts and chills his soul. When sudden cries  
From Ariannes rouse his drooping pow'rs.  
Alike in manners, they, of equal age,  
Were friends, and partners in the glorious toil  
Of war. Together they victorious chas'd  
The bleeding sons of Nile, when Ægypt's pride  
Before the sword of Hyperanthes fell.  
That lov'd companion Teribazus views  
By all abandon'd, in his gore outstretch'd,  
The victor's spoil. His languid spirit starts;  
He rushes ardent from the Persian line;  
The wounded warrior in his strong embrace

He bears away. By indignation stung,  
 Fierce from the Grecians, Diophantus sends  
 A loud defiance. Teribazus leaves  
 His rescu'd friend. His massy shield he rears;  
 High brandishing his formidable spear,  
 He turns intrepid on th' approaching foe.  
 Amazement follows. On he strides, and shakes  
 The plumed honours of his shining crest.  
 Th' ill-fated Greek awaits th' unequal fight;  
 Pierc'd in the throat, with sounding arms he falls.  
 Through ev'ry file the Mantineans mourn.  
 Long on the slain the victor fix'd his sight  
 With these reflections.... 'By thy splendid arms  
 Thou art a Greek of no ignoble rank.  
 From thy ill fortune I perhaps derive  
 A more conspicuous lustre. What if heav'n  
 Should add new victims, such as thou, to grace  
 My undeserving hand? Who knows but she  
 Might smile upon my trophies? Oh! vain thought!  
 I see the pride of Asia's monarch swell  
 With vengeance, fatal to her beauteous head.  
 Disperse, ye phantom hopes! Too long, torn heart,  
 Hast thou with grief contended. Lo! I plant  
 My foot this moment on the verge of death,  
 By fame invited, by despair impell'd,  
 To pass th' irremeable bound. No more  
 Shall Teribazus backward turn his step,  
 But here conclude his doom. Then cease to heave,  
 Thou troubled bosom; ev'ry thought be calm  
 Now at th' approach of everlasting peace.'

He ended; when a mighty foe drew nigh,  
 Not less than Dithyrambus. Ere they join'd  
 The Persian warrior to the Greek began....

'Art thou th' unconquerable chief, who now'd  
 Our battle down? That eagle on thy shield  
 Too well proclaims thee. To attempt thy force  
 I rashly purpos'd. That my single arm  
 Thou deign'st to meet, accept my thanks, and know  
 The thought of conquest less employs my soul  
 Than admiration of thy glorions deeds,  
 And that by thee I cannot fall disgrac'd.'

He ceas'd. These words the Thespian youth return'd....

' Of all the praises from thy gen'rous mouth,  
 The only portion my desert may claim  
 Is this my bold adventure, to confront  
 Thee, yet unmatch'd. What Grecian hath not mark'd  
 Thy fluning steel? From Asia's boundless camp  
 Not one hath equal'd thy victorious might.  
 But whence thy armour of the Grecian form?  
 Whence thy tall spear, thy helmet? Whence the weight  
 Of that strong shield? Unlike thy eastern friends,  
 O if thou be'st some fugitive, who, lost  
 To liberty and virtue, art become  
 A tyrant's vile stipendiary, that arm,  
 That valour, thus triumphant, I deplore,  
 Which, after all their efforts and success,  
 Deserve no honour from the gods or men.'

Here Teribazus in a sigh rejoin'd....

' I am to Greece a stranger, am a wretch  
 To thee unknown, who courts this hour to die,  
 Yet not ignobly, but in death to raise  
 My name from darkness, while I end my woes.'

The Grecian then.... ' I view thee, and I mourn.  
 A dignity, which virtue only bears,  
 Firm resolution, seated on thy brow,  
 Though grief hath dimm'd thy drooping eye, demand  
 My veneration: and, whatever be  
 The malice of thy fortune, what the cares  
 Infesting thus thy quiet, they create  
 Within my breast the pity of a friend.  
 Why then, constraining my reluctant hand  
 To act against thee, will thy might support  
 Th' unjust ambition of malignant kings,  
 The foes to virtue, liberty, and peace?  
 Yet, free from rage or enmity, I list  
 My adverse weapon. Victory I ask.  
 Thy life may fate for happier days reserve.'

This said, their beaming lances they protead,  
 Of hostile hate or fury both devoid,  
 As on the Isthmian or Olympic sands  
 For fame alone contending. Either host,  
 Pois'd on their arms, in silent wonder gaz'd.  
 The fight commences. Soon the Grecian spear,  
 Which, all the day in constant battle worn,

Unnumber'd shields and corselets had transfix'd,  
Against the Persian buckler, shiv'ring, breaks.  
Its master's hand disarming. Then began  
The sense of honour and the dread of shame,  
To swell in Dithyrambus. Undismay'd,  
He grappled with his foe, and instant seiz'd  
His threat'ning spear, before th' uplifted arm  
Could execute the meditated wound.  
The weapon-burst between their struggling grasp.  
Their hold they loosen, bare their shining swords.  
With equal swiftness to defend or charge,  
Each active youth advances and recedes.  
On every side they traverse. Now direct,  
Obliquely now, the wheeling blades descend.  
Still is the conflict dubious; when the Greek,  
Dissembling, points his falchion to the ground,  
His arm depressing, as o'ercome by toil;  
While with his buckler cautious he repels  
The blows, repeated by his active foe.  
Greece trembles for her hero. Joy pervades  
The ranks of Asia; Hyperanthes strides  
Before the line, preparing to receive  
His friend triumphant; while the wary Greek  
Calm and defensive bears th' assault. At last,  
As by th' incautious fury of his strokes,  
The Persian swung his cov'ring shield aside;  
The fatal moment Dithyrambus seiz'd.  
Light darting forward, with his feet outstretch'd,  
Between th' unguarded ribs he plung'd his steel.  
Affection, grief, and terror, wing the speed  
Of Hyperanthes. From his bleeding foe  
The Greek retires, not distant, and awaits  
The Persian prince. But he, with wat'ry cheeks,  
In speechless anguish clasps his dying friend;  
From whose cold lip, with interrupted phrase,  
These accents break.... 'O dearest, best of men!  
Ten thousand thoughts of gratitude and love  
Are struggling in my heart.... O'erpow'ring fate  
Denies my voice the utterance.... O my friend!  
O Hyperanthes! Hear my tongue unfold  
What, had I liv'd, thou never shouldst have known.  
I lov'd thy sister! With despair I lov'd!

Soliciting this honourable doom,  
 Without regret, in Persia's sight and thine,  
 I fall.' Th' inexorable hand of fate  
 Weighs down his eyelids, and the gloom of death  
 His fleeting light eternally o'ershades.  
 Him on Choaspes o'er the blooming verge  
 A frantic mother shall bewail; shall strew  
 Her silver tresses in the crystal wave;  
 While all the shores re-echo to the name  
 Of Teribazus lost. Th' afflicted prince,  
 Contemplating in tears the pallid corse,  
 Vents in these words the bitterness of grief.

' Oh Teribazus! Oh my friend! whose loss  
 I will deplore for ever. Oh what pow'r,  
 By me, by thee offended, clos'd thy breast  
 To Hyperanthes, in distrust unkind!  
 She should, she must have lov'd thee! Now no more  
 Thy placid virtues, thy instructive tongue,  
 Shall drop their sweetness on my secret hours.  
 But in complaints doth friendship waste the time,  
 Which to immediate vengeance should be giv'n?'

He ended, rushing furious on the Greek;  
 Who, while his gallant enemy expir'd,  
 While Hyperanthes tenderly receiv'd  
 The last embraces of his gasping friend,  
 Stood nigh, reclin'd in sadness on his shield,  
 And in the pride of victory repin'd.  
 Unmark'd, his foe approach'd. But forward sprung  
 Diomedon. Before the Thespian youth  
 Aloft he rais'd his targe, and loudly thus....

' Hold thee, Barbarian, from a life more worth  
 Than thou and Xerxes, with his host of slaves.'

His words he seconds with his rapid lance.  
 Soon a tremendous conflict had ensu'd;  
 But Intaphernes, Mindus, and a crowd  
 Of Persian lords, advancing, fill the space  
 Betwixt th' encount'ring chiefs. In mutual wrath,  
 With fruitless efforts, they attempt the fight.  
 So rage two bulls along th' opposing banks  
 Of some deep-flood, which parts the fruitful mead.  
 Defiance thunders from their angry mouths

In vain; in vain the furrow'd sod they rend;  
Wide rolls the stream, and intercepts the war.

As, by malignant fortune, if a drop  
Of moisture mingles with a burning mass  
Of liquid metal, instant show'rs of death  
On ev'ry side th' exploding fluid spreads;  
So disappointment irritates the flame  
Of fierce Plataea's chief, whose vengeance bursts  
In wide destruction. Embas, Daucus, fall;  
Arsæus, Ochus, Mendes, Artias, die;  
And ten most hardy of th' immortal guard;  
To shivers breaking on the Grecian shield  
Their gold embellish'd weapons, raise a mound  
O'er thy pale body, Oh in prime destroy'd,  
Of Asia's garden once the fairest plant,  
Fall'n Teribazus! Thy distracted friend  
From this thy temporary tomb is dragg'd  
By forceful zeal of satraps to the shore;  
Where then the brave Abrocomes arrang'd  
The succours new, by Abradates brought,  
Orontes and Mazæus. Turning swift,  
Abrocomes inform'd his brother thus....

' Strong reinforcement from th' immortal guard  
Pandates bold to Intaphernes leads,  
In charge to harass, by perpetual toil,  
Those Grecians next the mountain. Thou unite  
To me thy valour. Here the hostile ranks  
Less stable seem. Our joint impression try;  
Let all the weight of battle here impend.  
Rouse, Hyperanthes! Give regret to winds.  
Who hath not lost a friend this direful day?  
Let not our private cares assist the Greeks,  
Too strong already, or let sorrow act:  
Mourn and revenge.' These animating words  
Send Hyperanthes to the foremost line.  
His vengeful ardour leads. The battle joins.

Who stemm'd this tide of onset? Who imbru'd  
His shining spear the first in Persian blood?  
Eupalamus. Artembares he slew,  
With Derdas fierce, whom Caucasus had rear'd  
On his tempestuous brow, the savage sons



Of violence and rapine. But their doom  
Fires Hyperanthes, whose vindictive blade  
Arrests the victor in his haughty course.  
Beneath the strong Abrocomes o'erwhelm'd,  
Melissus swells the number of the dead.  
None could Mycenæ boast of prouder birth  
Than young Melissus, who in silver mail  
The line embellish'd. He in Cirrha's mead,  
Where high Parnassus from his double top  
O'ershades the Pythian games, the envy'd prize  
Of fame obtain'd. Low sinks his laurel'd head  
In death's cold night, and horrid gore deforms  
The graceful hair. Impatient to revenge,  
Aristobulus strides before the van.  
A storm of fury darkens all his brow.  
Around he rolls his gloomy eye: For death  
Is Alyattes mark'd, of regal blood,  
Deriv'd from Cræsus, once imperial lord  
Of nations. Him the nymphs of Halys wept,  
When, with delusive oracles beguil'd  
By Delphi's god, he pass'd their fatal waves  
A mighty empire to dissolve: nor knew  
Th' ill-destin'd prince that envious fortune watch'd  
That direful moment, from his hand to wrest  
The sceptre of his fathers. In the shade  
Of humble life his race on Tmolus' brow  
Lay hid, till, rous'd to battle, on this field  
Sinks Alyattes, and a royal breed  
In him extinct for ever. Lycis dies,  
For boist'rous war ill chosen. He was skill'd  
To tune the lulling flute and melt the heart,  
Or with his pipe's awak'ning strain allure  
The lovely dames of Lydia to the dance.  
They on the verdant level graceful mov'd  
In vary'd measures; while the cooling breeze,  
Beneath their swelling garments wanton'd o'er  
Their snowy breasts, and smooth Cæster's stream,  
Soft-gliding, murmur'd by. The hostile blade  
Draws forth his entrails. Prone he falls. Not long  
The victor triumphs. From the prostrate corse  
Of Lycis, while, insulting, he extracts  
The reeking weapon, Hyperanthes' steel

Invades his knee, and cuts the sinewy cords.  
 The Mycenæans with uplifted shields,  
 Corinthians and Phliasians, close around  
 The wounded chieftain. In redoubled rage  
 The contest glows. Abrocomes incites  
 Each noble Persian. Each his voice obeys.  
 Here Abradates, there Mazæus press,  
 Orontes and Hydarnes. None retire  
 From toil or peril. Urg'd on ev'ry side,  
 Mycenæ's band to fortune leave their chief.  
 Despairing, raging, destitute, he stands,  
 Propt on his spear. His wound forbids retreat.  
 None, but his brother Eumenes, abides  
 The dire extremity. His studded orb  
 Is held defensive. On his arm the sword  
 Of Hyperanthes rapidly descends.  
 Down drops the buckler, and the sever'd hand  
 Resigns its hold. The unprotected pair  
 By Asia's hero to the ground are swept;  
 As to a reaper crimson poppies low'r  
 Their heads luxuriant on the yellow plain:  
 From both their breasts the vital currents flow;  
 And mix their streams. Elate, the Persians pour  
 Their numbers, deep'ning on the foe, dismay'd.  
 The Grecks their station painfully maintain.  
 This Anaxander saw, whose faithless tongue  
 His colleague Leontiades bespake....

‘The hour is come to serve our Persian friends.  
 Behold, the Greeks are press'd. Let Thebes retire,  
 A bloodless conquest yielding to the king.’

This said, he drew the Thebans from their post,  
 Not with unpunish'd treachery. The lance  
 Of Abradates gor'd their foul retreat;  
 Nor knew the Asian chief that Asia's friend  
 Before him bled. Meantime, as mighty Jove,  
 Or he more ancient on the throne of heav'n,  
 When from the womb of Chaos dark the world  
 Emerg'd to birth, where'er he view'd the jar  
 Of atoms yet discordant and unform'd,  
 Confusion thence with pow'rful voice dispell'd,  
 Till light and order universal reign'd!  
 So from the hill Leonidas survey'd

The various war. He saw the Theban rout;  
 That Corinth, Phlius, and Mycenæ, look'd  
 Affrighted backward. Instantly his charge  
 Is borne by Maron, whom obedience wings,  
 Precipitating down the sacred cave,  
 That Sparta's ranks, advancing, should repair  
 The disannited phalanx. Ere they move  
 Diences inspires them.... 'Fame, my friends,  
 Calls forth your valour in a signal hour.  
 For yon this glorious crisis she reserv'd,  
 Laconia's splendour to assert. Young man,  
 Son of Megistiaz, follow.' He conducts  
 Th' experient'd troop. They lock their shields, and  
 wedg'd

In dense arrangement, repossess the void  
 Left by the faithless Thebans, and repulse  
 Th' exulting Persians. When, with efforts vain,  
 These oft renew'd the contest, and recoil'd  
 As oft, confounded with diminish'd ranks,  
 Lo! Hyperanthes blush'd, repeating late  
 The words of Artemisia.... 'Learn, O chiefs,  
 The only means of glory and success.  
 Unlike the others, whom we newly chas'd,  
 These are a band selected from the Greeks,  
 Perhaps the Spartans, whom we often hear  
 By Demaratus prais'd. To break their line  
 In vain we struggle, unarray'd and lax,  
 Depriv'd of union. Do not we preside  
 O'er Asia's armies, and our courage boast,  
 Our martial art above the vulgar herd?  
 Let us, ye chiefs, attempt in order'd ranks  
 To form a troop, and emulate the foe.'

They wait not dubious. On the Malian shore  
 In gloomy depth a column soon is form'd  
 Of all the nobles; Abradates strong,  
 Orontes bold, Mazæus, and the might  
 Of brave Abrocomes, with each who bore  
 The highest honours, and excell'd in arms;  
 Themselves the lords of nations, who before  
 The throne of Xerxes tributary bow'd.  
 To these succeed a chosen number, drawn  
 From Asia's legions, vaunted most in fight;

Who from their king perpetual stipends share;  
 Who, station'd round the provinces, by force  
 His tyranny uphold. In ev'ry part  
 Is Hyperanthes active, ardent, seen  
 Throughout the huge battalion. He adjusts  
 Their equal range, then, cautions, lest on march  
 Their unaccustom'd order should relax,  
 Full in the centre of the foremost rank  
 Orontes plants, committing to his hand  
 Th' imperial standard; whose expanded folds  
 Glow'd in the air, presenting to the sun  
 The richest dye of Tyre. The royal bird  
 Amid the gorgeous tincture shone express'd  
 In high-embroider'd gold. The wary prince  
 On this conspicuous, leading, sign of war,  
 Commands each satrap, posted in the van,  
 To fix his eye regardful, to direct  
 By this alone his even pace and slow,  
 Retiring, or advancing. So the star,  
 Chief of the spangles on that fancy'd bear,  
 Once an Idæan nymph, and nurse of Jove,  
 Bright Cynosura, to the Boréal pole  
 Attracts the sailor's eye, when distance hides  
 The headland signals, and her guiding ray,  
 New-ris'n, she throws. The hero next appoints  
 That ev'ry warrior through the length'ning files,  
 Observing none but those before him plac'd,  
 Shall watch their motions, and their steps pursue.  
 Nor is th' important thicket next the pass  
 Forgot. Two thousand of th' immortal guard  
 That station seize. His orders all perform'd,  
 Close by the standard he assumes his post.  
 Intrepid, thence he animates his friends....

‘ Heroic chieftains, whose unconquer'd force  
 Rebellious Egypt and the Libyan felt,  
 Think what the splendour of your former deeds  
 From you exacts. Remember, from the great  
 Illustrious actions are a debt to fame.  
 No middle path remains for them to tread,  
 Whom she hath once ennobled. Lo! this day  
 By trophies new will signalize your names,  
 Or in dishonour will for ever cloud.’

He said, and vig'rous all to fight proceed. .  
 As, when tempestuous Eurus steins the weight  
 Of western Neptune, struggling through the straits  
 Which bound Alcides' labours, here the storm  
 With rapid wing reverberates the tide ;  
 There the contending surge, with furrow'd tops,  
 To mountains swells, and, whelming o'er the beach  
 On either coast, impels the hoary foam  
 On Mauritanian and Iberian strands :  
 Such is the dreadful onset. Persia keeps  
 Her foremost ranks unbroken, which are fill'd  
 By chosen warriors; while the num'rous crowd,  
 Though still promiscuous pouring from behind,  
 Give weight and pressure to th' embattled chiefs,  
 Despising danger. Like the mural strength  
 Of some proud city, bulwark'd round, and arm'd  
 With rising tow'rs, to guard her wealthy stores,  
 Immovable, impenetrable, stood  
 Laconia's ferry'd phalanx. In their face  
 Grim tyranny her threat'ning fetters shakes,  
 Red havock grinds, insatiable, his jaws.  
 Greece is behind, intrusting to their swords  
 Her laws, her freedom, and the sacred urns  
 Of their forefathers. Present now to thought  
 Their altars rise, the mansions of their birth,  
 What'e'r they honour, venerate, and love.

Bright in the Persian van th' exalted lance  
 Of Hyperanthes flam'd. Beside him press'd  
 Abrocomes, Hydarnes, and the bulk  
 Of Abradates, terrible in war.  
 Firm, as a Memphian pyramid, was seen  
 Dienece; while Agis, close in rank  
 With Menalippus, and the added strength  
 Of dauntless Maron, their connected shields  
 Upheld. Each unrelax'd array maintains  
 The conflict undecided; nor could Greece  
 Repel the adverse numbers, nor the weight  
 Of Asia's band select remove the Greeks.

Swift from Laconia's king, perceiving soon  
 The Persian's new arrangement, Medon flew,  
 Who thus the staid Dienece address'd....

' Leonidas commands the Spartan ranks

To measure back some paces. Soon he deems,  
The unexperienc'd foes in wild pursuit  
Will break their order. Then the charge renew.'

This heard, the signal of retreat is giv'n.  
The Spartans seem to yield. The Persians stop.  
Astonishment restrains them, and the doubt  
Of unexpected victory. Their sloth  
Abrocomes awakens....' By the sun,  
They fly before us. My victorious friends,  
Do you delay to enter Greece? Away!  
Rush on intrepid! I already hear  
Our horse, our chariots, thund'ring on her plains,  
I see her temples wrapt in Persian fires.'

He spake. In hurry'd violence they roll  
Tumultuous forward. All in headlong pace  
Disjoin their order, and the line dissolve.  
This when the sage Dieneces describes,  
The Spartans halt, returning to the charge  
With sudden vigour. In a moment, pierc'd  
By his resistless steel, Orontes falls,  
And quits th' imperial banner. This the chief  
In triumph waves. The Spartans press the foe.  
Close-wedg'd and square, in slow, progressive pace,  
O'er heaps of mangled carcasses and arms,  
Invincible they tread. Composing flutes  
Each thought, each motion, harmonize. No rage  
Untunes their souls. The phalanx yet more deep  
Of Medon follows; while the lighter bands  
Glide by the flanks, and reach the broken foe.  
Amid their flight what vengeance from the arm  
Of Alpheus falls! O'er all in swift pursuit  
Was he renown'd. His active feet had match'd  
The son of Peleus in the dusty course;  
But now the wrongs, the long-remember'd wrongs  
Of Polydorus animate his strength  
With tenfold vigour. Like th' empurpled moon,  
When in eclipse her silver disk hath lost  
The wonted light, his buckler's polish'd face  
Is now obscur'd; the figur'd bosses drop  
In crimson, spouting from his deathful strokes.  
As when, with horror wing'd, a whirlwind reuds  
A shatter'd navy from the ocean cast,

Enormous fragments hide the level bench;  
 Such as dejected Persia late beheld  
 On Thessaly's unnavigable strand:  
 Thus o'er the champaign satraps lay bestrewn  
 By 'Alpheus, persevering in pursuit  
 Beyond the pass. Not Phœbus could inflict  
 On Niobé more vengeance when, incens'd  
 By her maternal arrogance, which scorn'd  
 Latona's race, he twang'd his ireful bow,  
 And one by one, from youth and beauty, hur'd  
 Her sons to Pluto; nor severer pangs  
 That mother felt than pierc'd the gen'rous soul  
 Of Hyperanthes, while his noblest friends  
 On ev'ry side lay gasping. With despair  
 He still contends. Th' immortals, from their stand  
 Behind th' entangling thicket next the pass,  
 His signal rouses. Ere they clear their way,  
 Well-caution'd Medon from the close defile  
 Two thousand Locrians pours. An aspect new  
 The fight assumes. Through implicated shrubs  
 Confusion waves each banner. Falchions, spears,  
 And shields, are all encumber'd; till the Greeks  
 Had forc'd a passage to the yielding foe.  
 Then Medon's arm is felt. The dreadful boar,  
 Wide-wasting once the Calydonian fields,  
 In fury breaking from his gloomy lair,  
 Rang'd with less havoc through unguarded folds  
 Than Medon, sweeping down the glitt'ring files,  
 So vainly styl'd immortal. From the cliff  
 Divine Melissa and Laconia's king  
 Enjoy the glories of Oilens' son.  
 Fierce Alpheus too, returning from his chase,  
 Joins in the slaughter. Ev'ry Persian falls.

To him the Locrian chief.... 'Brave Spartan, thanks.  
 Through thee my purpose is accomplish'd full.  
 My phalanx here with levell'd rows of spears  
 Shall guard the shelter'd bushes. Come what may  
 From Asia's camp, th' assailant, flank'd and driv'n  
 Down yonder slope, shall perish. Gods of Greece,  
 You shall behold your fanes profusely deck'd  
 In splendid off'rings from Barbarian spoils,  
 Won by your free-born supplicants this day.'

This said, he forms his ranks. Their threat'ning points  
 Glean through the thicket, whence the shiv'ring foes  
 Avert their sight, like passengers dismay'd,  
 Who on their course by Nile's portentous banks  
 Descry, in ambush of perfidious reeds,  
 The crocodile's fell teeth. Contiguous lay  
 Thermopylæ. Dieneces secur'd  
 The narrow mouth. Two lines the Spartans shew'd:  
 One tow'rd the plain observ'd the Persian camp;  
 One, led by Agis, fac'd the interior pass.

Not yet discourag'd, Hyperanthes strives  
 The scatter'd host to rally. He exhorts,  
 Entreats; at length, indignant, thus exclaims....

' Degen'rate Persians! to sepulchral dust  
 Could breath return, your fathers from the tomb  
 Would utter groans. Inglorious, do ye leave  
 Behind you Persia's standard to adorn  
 Some Grecian temple? Can your splendid cars,  
 Voluptuous couches, and delicious boards,  
 Your gold, your gems, ye satraps, be preserv'd  
 By cowardice and flight? The ennuich slave  
 Will scorn such lords, your women loath your beds.'

Few hear him, fewer follow; while the fight  
 His unabating courage oft renews,  
 As oft repuls'd with danger; till, by all  
 Deserted, mixing in the gen'ral rout,  
 He yields to fortune, and regains the camp.  
 In short advances, thus the dying tide  
 Beats for a while against the shelving strand,  
 Still by degrees retiring, and at last  
 Within the bosom of the main subsides.

Though Hyperanthes from the fight was driv'n;  
 Close to the mountain, whose indented side  
 There gave the widen'd pass an ample space  
 For numbers to embattle, still his post  
 Bold Intaphernes, underneath a cliff,  
 Against the firm Plataean line maintain'd.  
 On him look'd down Leonidas, like Death,  
 When, from his iron cavern call'd by Jove,  
 He stands gigantic on a mountain's head;  
 Whence he commands th' affrighted earth to quake,  
 And, crags and forests in his direful grasp



High-wielding, dashes on a town below,  
Whose deeds of black impiety provoke  
The long-enduring Gods. Around the verge  
Of Oeta, curving to a crescent's shape,  
The marbles, timbers, fragments, lay amass'd.  
The Helots, peasants, mariners, attend  
In order nigh Leonidas. They watch  
His look. He gives the signal. Rous'd at once,  
The force, the skill, activity, and zeal,  
Of thousands are combin'd. Down rush the piles.  
Trees roll'd on trees, with mingled rock descend,  
Unintermitted ruin. Loud resound  
The hollow trunks against the mountain's side.  
Swift bounds each craggy mass. The foes below  
Look up aghast, in horror shrink, and die.  
Whole troops, o'erwhelm'd beneath th' enormous load,  
Lie hid and lost, as never they had known  
A name or being. Intaphernes, clad  
In regal splendour, progeny of kings,  
Who rul'd Damascus, and the Syrian plains,  
Here slept for ever. Thousands of his train  
In that broad space the ruins had not reach'd.  
Back to the camp a passage they attempt  
Through Lacedæmon's line. Them Agis stopt.  
Before his pow'rful arm Pandates fell,  
Sosarmes, Tachos. Menalippus dy'd  
His youthful steel in blood. The mightier spear  
Of Maron pierc'd battalions, and enlarg'd  
The track of slaughter. Backward turn'd the rout,  
Nor found a milder fate. Th' unwary'd swords  
Of Dithyrambus and Diomedon,  
Who from the hill are wheeling on their flank,  
Still flash tremendous. To the shore they fly,  
At once envelop'd by successive bands  
Of diff'rent Grecians. From the gulph profound  
Perdition here inevitable frowns,  
While there, encircled by a grove of spears,  
They stand devoted hecatombs to Mars.  
Now not a moment's interval delays  
Their gen'ral doom; but down the Malian steep  
Prone are they hurry'd to th' expanded arms  
Of horror, rising from the oozy deep,

And grasping all their numbers as they fall.  
The dire confusion like a storm invades  
The chafing surge. Whole troops Bellona rolls  
In one vast ruin from the craggy ridge.  
O'er all their arms, their ensigns, deep-engulph'd,  
With hideous roar the waves for ever close.

# LEONIDAS.

*BOOK IX.*

## The Argument.

*Night coming on, the Grecians retire to their tents.*

*A guard is placed on the Phocian wall, under the command of Agis. He admits into the camp a lady, accompanied by a single slave, and conducts them to Leonidas; when she discovers herself to be Ariana, sister of Xerxes and Hyperanthes, and sues for the body of Teribazus; which being found among the slain, she kills herself upon it. The slave, who attended her, proves to be Polydorus, brother to Alpheus and Maron, and who had been formerly carried into captivity by a Phœnician pirate. He relates, before an assembly of the chiefs, a message from Demaratus to the Spartans, which discloses the treachery of the Thebans, and of Epialtes the Malian, who had undertaken to lead part of the Persian army through a pass among the mountains of Oeta. This information throws the council into a great tumult, which is pacified by Leonidas, who sends Alpheus to observe the motions of these Persians, and Dieneces, with a party of Lacedæmonians, to support the Phocians, with whom the defence of these passages in the hills had been intrusted. In the mean time Agis sends the bodies of Teribazus and Ariana to the camp of Xerxes.*

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK IX.

**I**N sable vesture, spangled o'er with stars,  
The night assum'd her throne. Reca'd from war,  
Their toil protracted long, the Greeks forget,  
Dissolv'd in silent slumber, all but those  
Who watch'd th' uncertain perils of the dark,  
A hundred warriors. Agis was their chief.  
High on the wall, intent, the hero sat.  
Fresh winds across the undulating bay  
From Asia's host the various din convey'd  
In one deep murmur, swelling on his ear;  
When, by the sound of footsteps down the pass  
Alarm'd, he calls aloud.... 'What feet are these  
Which beat th' echoing pavement of the rock?  
Reply, nor tempt inevitable fate.'

A voice reply'd.... 'No enemies we come,  
But crave admittance in an humble tone.'

The Spartan answers.... 'Through the midnight shade  
What purpose draws your wand'ring steps abroad?'

'To whom the stranger....' We are friends to Greece.  
Through thy assistance we implore access  
To Lacedæmon's king.' The cautious Greek  
Still hesitates: when musically sweet  
A tender voice his wond'ring ear allures.

'O gen'rous warrior, listen to the pray'r  
Of one distress'd, whom grief alone hath led  
Through midnight shades to these victorious tents;  
A wretched woman, innocent of fraud.'

The chief, descending, through th' unfolded gates  
Upheld a flaming torch. The light disclos'd  
One first in servile garments. Near his side  
A woman graceful and majestic stood;  
Not with an aspect rivalling the pow'r  
Of fatal Helen, or th' ensnaring charms

Of love's soft queen; but such as far surpass'd  
 Whate'er the lily, blending with the rose,  
 Spreads on the cheek of beauty, soon to fade;  
 Such as express'd a mind by wisdom rul'd,  
 By sweetness temper'd; virtue's purest light -  
 Illumining the countenance divine:  
 Yet could not soften rig'rous fate, nor charm  
 Malignant fortune to reverse the good;  
 Which oft with anguish rends a spotless heart,  
 And oft associates wisdom with despair.  
 In courteous phrase began the chief humane....

' Exalted fair, whose form adorns the night,  
 Forbear to blame the vigilance of war.  
 My slow compliance to the rigid laws  
 Of Mars impute. In me no longer pause  
 Shall from the presence of our king withhold  
 This thy apparent dignity and worth.'

Here ending, he conducts her. At the call  
 Of his lov'd brother, from his couch arose  
 Leonidas. In wonder he survey'd  
 Th' illustrious virgin, whom his presence aw'd.  
 Her eye submissive, to the ground declin'd,  
 In veneration of the godlike man.  
 His mien, his voice, her anxious dread dispel,  
 Benevolent and hospitable thus....

' Thy looks, fair stranger, amiable and great,  
 A mind delineate which from all commands  
 Supreme regard. Relate, thou noble dame,  
 By what relentless destiny compell'd,  
 Thy tender feet the paths of darkness tread;  
 Rehearse th' afflictions whence thy virtue mourns.'

On her wan cheek a sudden blush arose,  
 Like day first dawning on the twilight pale?  
 When, wrapt in grief, these words a passage found....

' If to be most unhappy, and to know  
 That hope is irrecoverably fled,  
 If to be great and wretched, may deserve  
 Commiseration from the brave; behold,  
 Thou glorious leader of unconquer'd bands,  
 Behold, descended from Darius' loins,  
 Th' afflicted Ariana; and my pray'r  
 Accept with pity, nor my tears disdain.

First, that I lov'd the best of human race,  
 Heroic, wise, adorn'd by ev'ry art,  
 Of shame unconscious, doth my heart reveal.  
 This day, in Grecian arms conspicuous clad,  
 He fought, he fell. A passion long conceal'd,  
 For me, alas! within my brother's arms  
 His dying breath resigning, he disclos'd.  
 Oh! I will stay my sorrows! will forbid  
 My eyes to stream before thee, and my breast,  
 O'erwhelm'd by anguish, will from sighs restrain!  
 For why should thy humanity be griev'd  
 At my distress, why learn from me to mourn  
 The lot of mortals, doom'd to pain and wo!  
 Hear then, O king, and grant my sole request,  
 To seek his body in the heaps of slain.'

Thus to the hero sn'd the royal maid,  
 Resembling Ceres in majestic wo,  
 When supplicating Jove, from Stygian gloom,  
 And Pluto's black embraces, to redeem  
 Her lov'd and lost Proserpina. Awhile  
 On Ariana fixing stedfast eyes,  
 These tender thoughts Leonidas recal'd....

' Such are thy sorrows, O for ever dear,  
 Who now at Lacedæmon dost deplore  
 My everlasting absence!' Then aside  
 He turn'd and sigh'd. Recov'ring, he address'd  
 His brother.... ' Most beneficent of men,  
 Attend, assist this prince!' Night retires  
 Before the purple-winged morn. A band  
 Is call'd. The well-remember'd spot they find  
 Where Teribazus from his dying hand  
 Dropt in their sight his formidable sword.  
 Soon from beneath a pile of Asian dead  
 They draw the hero, by his armour known.

Then, Ariana, what transcending pangs  
 Were thine! what horrors! In thy tender breast  
 Love still was mightiest. On the bosom cold  
 Of Teribazus, grief-distracted maid,  
 Thy beauteous limbs were thrown. Thy snowy hue  
 The clotted gore disfigur'd. On his wounds  
 Loose flow'd thy hair, and, bubbling from thy eyes,

Impetuous sorrow lav'd th' empurpled clay.  
When forth in groans these lamentations broke....

' O, torn for ever from these weeping eyes!  
Thou, who, despairing to obtain a heart  
Which then most lov'd thee, didst untimely yield  
Thy life to fate's inevitable dart  
For her, who now in agony reveals  
Her tender passion, who repeats her vows  
To thy deaf ear, who fondly to her own  
Unites thy cheek insensible and cold.  
Alas! do those unmoving, ghastly, orbs  
Perceive my gushing sorrow! Can that heart  
At my complaint dissolve the ice of death,  
'To share my suff'rings? Never, never more  
Shall Ariana bend a list'ning ear  
'To thy enchanting eloquence, nor feast  
Her mind on wisdom from thy copious tongue!  
Oh! bitter, insurmountable distress!

She could no more. Invincible despair  
Suppress'd all utterance. As a marble form,  
Fix'd on the solemn sepulchre, inclines  
The silent head, in imitated woe,  
O'er some dead hero whom his country lov'd,  
Entranc'd by anguish, o'er the breathless clay  
So hung the princess. On the gory breach,  
Whence life had issu'd by the fatal blow,  
Mute for a space, and motionless, she gaz'd;  
When thus in accents firm. ' Imperial pomp,  
Foe to my quiet, take my last farewell!  
There is a state where only virtue holds  
The rank supreme. My Teribazus there  
From his high order must descend to mine.'

Then, with no trembling hand, no change of look,  
She drew a poniard, which her garment veil'd!  
And, instant sheathing in her heart the blade,  
On her slain lover silent sunk in death!  
The unexpected stroke prevents the care  
Of Agis, pierc'd by horror and distress,  
Like one who, standing on a stormy beach,  
Beholds a found'ring vessel by the deep  
At once engulph'd, his pity feels and mourns,



Depriv'd of pow'r to save; so Agis view'd  
The prostrate pair. He dropt a tear, and thus....

'Oh, much lamented! Heavy on your heads  
Hath evil fall'n, which o'er your pale remains  
Commands this sorrow from a stranger's eye.  
Illustrious ruins! May the grave impart  
That peace which life deny'd! And now receive  
This pious office from a hand unknown.'

He spake, unclasping from his shoulders broad  
His ample robe. He strew'd the waving folds  
O'er each wan visage; turning then, address'd  
The slave, in mute dejection standing near....

'Thou, who, attendant on this hapless fair,  
Hast view'd this dreadful spectacle, return.  
These bleeding reliques bear to Persia's king;  
Thou with four captives, whom I free from bonds.'

'Art thou a Spartan?' interrupts the slave.  
'Dost thou command me to return, and pine  
In climes unblest'd by liberty or laws?

Grant me to see Leonidas. Alone  
Let him decide if, wretched as I seem,  
I may not claim protection from this camp.'

'Whoe'er thou art,' rejoins the chief, amaz'd,  
But not offended, 'thy ignoble garb  
Conceal'd a spirit which I now revere.  
Thy countenance demands a better lot  
Than I, a stranger to thy hidden worth,  
Unconscious, offer'd. Freedom dwells in Greece,  
Humanity and justice. Thou shalt see  
Leonidas, their guardian.' To the king  
He leads him straight; presents him in these words....

'In mind superior to the base attire  
Which marks his limbs with shame, a stranger comes,  
Who thy protection claims.' The slave subjoins....

'I stand thy suppliant now. Thou soon shalt learn  
If I deserve thy favour. I request  
To meet th' assembled chieftains of this host.  
Oh! I am fraught with tidings which import  
The weal of ev'ry Grecian.' Agis swift,  
Appointed by Leonidas, convenes  
The diff'rent leaders. To the tent they speed.  
Before them call'd, the stranger thus began....

‘ O Alpheus! Maron! Hither turn your sight,  
And know your brother!’ From their seats they start.  
From either breaks, in ecstasy, the name  
Of Polydorus. To his dear embrace  
Each fondly strives to rush; but he withstands;  
While down his cheek a flood of anguish pours  
From his dejected eyes, in torture bent  
On that vile garb, dishonouring his form.  
At length these accents, intermix’d with groans,  
A passage found, while mute attention gaz’d.

‘ You first should know if this unhappy slave  
Yet merits your embraces.’ Then approach’d  
Leonidas. Before him all recede,  
Ev’n Alpheus’ self, and yields his brother’s hand,  
Which in his own the regal hero press’d.  
Still Polydorus on his gloomy front  
Repugnance stern to consolation bore;  
When thus the king with majesty benign....

‘ Lo! every heart is open to thy worth.  
Injurious fortune and enfeebling time,  
By servitude and grief, severely try  
A lib’ral spirit. Try’d, but not subdu’d,  
Dost thou appear. Whatever be our lot  
Is heav’n’s appointment. Patience best becomes  
The citizen and soldier. Let the sight  
Of friends and brethren dissipate thy gloom.’

Of men the gentlest, Agis too advanc’d,  
Who with increas’d humanity began....

‘ Now in thy native liberty secure,  
Smile on thy past affliction, and relate  
What chance restores thy merit to the arms  
Of friends and kindred.’ Polydorus then....

‘ I was a Spartan. When my tender prime  
On manhood border’d, from Laconia’s shores  
Snatch’d by Phœnician pirates, I was sold  
A slave, by Hyperanthes bought, and giv’n  
To Ariana. Gracious was her hand,  
But I remain’d a bondman, still estrang’d  
From Lacedæmon. Demaratus oft,  
In friendly sorrow, would my lot deplore;  
Nor less his own ill-fated virtue mourn’d,  
Lost to his country in a servile court,

The centre of corruption ; where in smiles  
 Are painted envy, treachery, and hate,  
 With rankling malice ; where, alone sincere,  
 The dissolute seek no disguise ; where those,  
 Possessing all a monarch can bestow,  
 Are far less happy than the meanest heir  
 To freedom, far more grov'ling than the slave  
 Who serves their cruel pride. Yet here the sun  
 Ten times his yearly circle hath renew'd  
 Since Polydorus hath in bondage groan'd.  
 My bloom is pass'd, or, pining in despair,  
 Untimely wither'd. I at last return  
 A messenger of fate, who tidings bear  
 Of desolation.' Here he paus'd in grief  
 Redoubled ; when Leonidas.... ' Proceed.  
 Should from thy lips inevitable death  
 To all be threaten'd, thou art heard by none  
 Whose dauntless hearts can entertain a thought  
 But how to fall the noblest.' Thus the king.  
 The rest in speechless expectation wait.  
 Such was the solemn silence which o'erspread  
 The shrine of Ammon, or Dodona's shades,  
 When anxious mortals from the mouth of Jove  
 Their doom explor'd. Nor Polydorus long  
 Suspends the council, but resumes his tale....

' As I this night accompany'd the steps  
 Of Ariana, near the pass we saw  
 A restless form, now traversing the way,  
 Now as a statue rivetted by doubt,  
 Then on a sudden starting to renew  
 An eager pace. As nearer we approach'd,  
 He by the moon, which glimmer'd on our heads,  
 Descry'd us. Straight advancing, whither bent  
 Our midnight course he ask'd. I knew the voice  
 Of Demaratus. To my breast I clasp'd  
 The venerable exile, and reply'd....

' Laconia's camp we seek. Demand no more.  
 Farewell." He wept. " Be heav'n thy guide," he said,  
 ' Thrice happy Polydorus. Thou again  
 Mayst visit Sparta, to these eyes deny'd.  
 Soon as arriv'd at those triumphant tents,  
 Say to the Spartans, from their exil'd king,

Although their blind credulity depriv'd  
 The wretched Demaratus of his home,  
 From ev'ry joy secluded, from his wife,  
 His offspring torn, his countrymen and friends,  
 Him from his virtue they could ne'er divide.  
 Say that ev'n here, where all are kings or slaves,  
 Amid the riot of flagitious courts,  
 Not quite extinct, his Spartan spirit glows,  
 Though grief hath dimm'd its fires. Remenb'ring this,  
 Report that newly to the Persian host  
 Return'd a Malian, Epialtes nam'd,  
 Who, as a spy, the Grecian tents had sought.  
 He to the monarch magnify'd his art,  
 Which, by delusive eloquence, had wrought  
 The Greeks to such despair, that ev'ry band  
 To Persia's sov'reign standard would have bow'd,  
 Had not the spirit of a single chief,  
 By fear unconquer'd, and on death resolv'd,  
 Restor'd their valour: therefore, would the king  
 Trust to his guidance a selected force,  
 They soon should pierce th' unguarded bounds of Greece  
 Through a neglected aperture above,  
 Where no Leonidas should bar their way!  
 Meantime by him the treach'rous Thebans sent  
 Assurance of their aid. Th' assenting prince  
 At once decreed two myriads to advance  
 With Hyperanthes. Ev'ry lord besides,  
 Whom youth, or courage, or ambition warm,  
 Rous'd by the traitor's eloquence, attend  
 From all the nations, with a rival zeal  
 To enter Greece the foremost." In a sigh  
 He clos'd....like me.' Tremendous, from his seat  
 Uprose Diomedon. His eyes were flames.  
 When swift on trembling Anaxander, broke  
 These ireful accents from his livid lips....

' Yet, ere we fall, O traitor, shall this arm  
 To hell's avenging furies sink thy head!

All now is tumult. Ev'ry bosom swells  
 With wrath untam'd and vengeance. Half unsheath'd,  
 Th' impetuous falchion of Plataea flames.  
 But, as the Colchian sorceress, renown'd  
 In legends old, or Circé, when they fram'd

A potent spell, to smoothness charm'd the main,  
 And lull'd Æolian rage by mystic song,  
 Till not a billow heav'd against the shore,  
 Nor ev'n the wanton-winged zephyr breath'd  
 The lightest whisper through the magic air;  
 So, when thy voice, Leonidas, is heard,  
 Confusion listens; ire in silent awe  
 Subsides. 'Withhold this rashness,' cries the king.  
 'To proof of guilt let punishment succeed.  
 Not yet Barbarian shouts our camp alarm.  
 We still have time for vengeance, time to know  
 If menac'd ruin we may yet repel,  
 Or how most glorious perish.' Next arose  
 Dieneces, and thus th' experienc'd man....

'Ere they surmount our fences, Xerxes' troops  
 Must learn to conquer, and the Greeks to fly.  
 The spears of Phocis guard that secret pass.  
 To them let instant messengers depart,  
 And note the hostile progress.' Alpheus here....

'Leonidas, behold, my willing feet  
 Shall to the Phocians bear thy high commands;  
 Shall climb the hill to watch th' approaching foe.'

'Thou active son of valour,' quick returns  
 The chief of Lacedæmon, 'in my thoughts  
 For ever present, when the public weal  
 Requires the swift, the vigilant, and bold,  
 Go, climb, surmount the rock's aerial height;  
 Observe the hostile march. A Spartan band,  
 Dieneces, provide. Thyself conduct  
 Their speedy succour to our Phocian friends.'

The council rises. For his course prepar'd,  
 While day, declining, prompts his eager feet,  
 'O Polydorus,' Alpheus thus in haste,  
 'Long lost, and late recover'd, we must part  
 Again, perhaps for ever. Thou return  
 To kiss the sacred soil which gave thee birth,  
 And calls thee back to freedom. Brother dear,  
 I should have sighs to give thee....but farewell!  
 My country chides me, loit'ring in thy arms.'

This said, he darts along, nor looks behind,  
 When Polydorus answers....'Alpheus, no.

I have the marks of bondage to erase.

My blood must wash the shameful stain away.'

'We have a father,' Maron interpos'd.

'Thy unexpected presence will revive  
His heavy age, now childless and forlorn.'

To him the brother with a gloomy frown....

'Ill should I comfort others. View these eyes;  
Faint is their light; and vanish'd was my bloom.

Before its hour of ripeness. In my breast

Grief will retain a mansion, nor by time

Be dispossest. Unceasing shall my soul

Brood o'er the black remembrance of my youth

In slavery exhausted. Life to me

Hath lost its savour.' Then, in sullen wo,

His head declines. His brother pleads in vain.

Now in his view Dieneces appear'd,

With Sparta's band. Immoveable, his eyes

On them he fix'd, revolving these dark thoughts....

'I too, like them, from Lacedæmon spring;

Like them instructed once to poise the spear,

To lift the pond'rous shield. Ill-destin'd wretch!

Thy arm is grown enervate, and would sink

Beneath a buckler's weight. Malignant fates!

Who have compell'd my free-born hand to change  
The warrior's arms for ignominious bonds!

Would you compensate for my chains, my shame,

My ten years' anguish, and the fell despair

Which on my youth have prey'd? Relenting once,

Grant I may bear my buckler to the field,

And, known a Spartan, seek the shades below.'

'Why, to be known a Spartan, must thou seek  
The shades below?' Impatient Maron spake.

'Live, and be known a Spartan by thy deeds.

Live, and enjoy thy dignity of birth.

Live, and perform the duties which become

A citizen of Sparta. Still thy brow

Frowns gloomy, still unyielding. He, who leads

Our band, all fathers of a noble race,

Will ne'er permit thy barren day to close

Without an offspring to uphold the state.'

'He will,' replies the brother in a glow,

Prevailing o'er the paleness of his cheek ;  
' He will permit me to complete by death  
The measure of my duty ; will permit  
Me to achieve a service, which no hand  
But mine can render, to adorn his fall  
With double lustre, strike the barb'rous foe  
With endless terror, and avenge the shame  
Of an enslav'd Laconian.' Closing here  
His words mysterious, quick he turn'd away,  
To find the tent of Agis. There his hand  
In grateful sorrow minister'd her aid ;  
While the humane, the hospitable, care  
Of Agis, gently by her lover's corse,  
On one sad bier, the pallid beauties laid  
Of Ariana. He from bondage freed  
Four eastern captives, whom his gen'rons arm  
That day had spar'd in battle ; then began  
This solemn charge. ' You, Persians, whom my sword  
Acquir'd in war, unransom'd, shall depart.  
To you I render freedom, which you sought  
To wrest from me. One recompence I ask,  
And one alone. Transport to Asia's camp  
This bleeding princess. Bid the Persian king  
Weep o'er this flow'r, untimely cut in bloom ;  
Then say th' all-judging pow'rs have thus ordain'd.  
Thou, whose ambition o'er the groaning earth  
Leads desolation ; o'er the nations spreads  
Calamity and tears ; thou first shalt mourn,  
And through thy house destruction first shall range.'

Dismiss'd, they gain the rampart, where on guard  
Was Dithyrambus posted. He perceiv'd  
The mournful bier approach. To him the fate  
Of Ariana was already told.

He met the captives with a moisten'd eye,  
Full bent on Teribazus, sigh'd, and spake....

' O that, assuming with those Grecian arms  
A Grecian spirit, thou in scorn hadst look'd  
On princes ! Worth like thine, from slavish courts  
Withdrawn, had ne'er been wasted to support  
A king's injustice. Then a gentler lot  
Had bless'd thy life, or, dying, thou hadst known,  
How sweet is death for liberty. A Greek

Affords these friendly wishes, though his head  
Had lost the honours gather'd from thy fall,  
When fortune favour'd, or propitious Jove  
Smil'd on the better cause. Ill-fated pair,  
Whom in compassion's purest dew I lave,  
But that my hand infix'd the deathful wound,  
And must be grievous to your loathing shades,  
From all the neigh'ring vallies would I cull  
Their fairest growth to strew your hearse with flow'rs.  
Yet, O accept these tears and pious pray'rs!  
May peace surround your ashes! May your shades.  
Pass o'er the silent pool to happier seats!"

He ceas'd in tears. The captives leave the wall,  
And slowly down Thermopylæ proceed.



# LEONIDAS.

*BOOK X.*

## The Argument.

*Medon contenes the Locrian commanders, and harangues them; repairs at midnight to his sister Melissa in the temple, and receives from her the first intelligence that the Persians were in actual possession of the upper Straits, which had been abandoned by the Phocians. Melibæus brings her tidings of her father's death. She strictly enjoins her brother to preserve his life by a timely retreat, and recommends the enforcement of her advice to the prudence and zeal of Melibæus. In the morning the bodies of Teribæus and Ariana are brought into the presence of Xerxes, soon after a report had reached the camp that great part of his navy was shipwrecked. The Persian monarch, quite dispirited, is persuaded by Argestes to send an ambassador to the Spartan king. Argestes himself is deputed, who, after revealing his embassy in secret to Leonidas, is by him led before the whole army, and there receives his answer. Alpheus returns, and declares that the enemy was master of the passages in the hills, and would arrive at Thermopylæ the next morning; upon which Leonidas offers to send away all the troops, except his three hundred Spartans; but Diomedon, Demophilus, Dithyrambus, and Megistias, refuse to depart; then, to relieve the perplexity of Medon on this occasion, he transfers to him the supreme command, dismisses Argestes, orders the companions of his own fate to be ready in arms by sunset, and retires to his pavilion.*

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK X.

**T**HE Grecian leaders, from the council ris'n,  
Among the troops dispersing, by their words,  
Their looks undaunted, warm the coldest heart  
Against new dangers threat'ning. To his tent  
The Locrian captains Medon swift convenes,  
Exhorting thus.... 'O long-approv'd my friends,  
You who have seen my father in the field  
Triumphant, bold assistants of my arm  
In labours not inglorious, who this day  
Have rais'd fresh trophies, be prepar'd. If help  
Be further wanted in the Phocian camp,  
You will the next be summon'd. Locris lies  
To ravage first expos'd. Your ancient fane,  
Your goddesses, your priestess half-ador'd,  
The daughter of Oileus, from your swords  
Protection claim against an impious foe.'

All anxious for Melissa, he dismiss'd  
Th' applauding vet'rans; to the sacred cave  
Then hasten'd. Under heav'n's night-shaded cope  
He mus'd. Melissa in her holy place  
How to approach, with inauspicious steps,  
How to accost, his pensive mind revolv'd:  
When Mycon, pious vassal of the fane,  
Descending through the cavern, at the sight  
Of Medon stopt, and thus.... 'Thy presence, lord,  
The priestess calls. To Lacedæmon's king  
I bear a message, suff'ring no delay.'

He quits the chief, whose rapid feet ascend,  
Soon ent'ring where the pedestal displays  
Thy form, Calliopé sublime. The lyre,  
Whose accents immortality confer,  
The fingers seem to wake. On either side  
Thy snowy gloss of Parian marble shews

Four of thy sisters through surrounding shade,  
 Before each image is a virgin plac'd.  
 Before each virgin dimly burns a lamp,  
 Whose livid spires just temper with a gleam  
 The dead obscurity of night. Apart  
 The priestess thoughtful sits. Thus Medon breaks  
 The solemn silence.... 'Anxious for thy state,  
 Without a summons, to thy pure abode  
 I was approaching. Deities who know  
 The present, past, and future, let my lips  
 Unblam'd have utterance! Thou, my sister, hear!  
 Thy breast let wisdom strengthen. Impious foes  
 Through Oeta now are passing!' She replies....

'Are passing, brother! They, alas, are pass'd,  
 Are in possession of the upper Strait!  
 Hear in thy turn. A dire narration hear.  
 A favour'd goat, conductor of my herd,  
 Stray'd to a dale, whose outlet is the post  
 To Phocians left, and penetrates to Greece.  
 Him Mycon following, by a hostile band,  
 Light arm'd forerunners of a num'rous host,  
 Was seiz'd. By fear of menac'd torments forc'd,  
 He shew'd a passage up that mountain's side  
 Whose length of wood o'ershades the Phocian land.  
 To dry and sapless trunks in diff'rent parts,  
 Fire, by the Persians artfully apply'd,  
 Soon grew to flames. This done, the troop return'd,  
 Detaining Mycon. Now the mountain blaz'd.  
 'The Phocians, ill-commanded, left their post,  
 Alarm'd, confus'd. More distant ground they chose.  
 In blind delusion forming there, they spread  
 Their ineffectual banners, to repel  
 Imagin'd peril from those fraudulent lights,  
 By stratagem prepar'd. A real foe  
 Meantime secur'd the undefended pass.  
 This Mycon saw. Escaping thence to me,  
 He, by my orders, hastens to inform  
 Leonidas.' She paus'd. Like one, who sees  
 The forked lightning into shivers rive  
 A knotted oak, or crumble tow'rs to dust,  
 Aghast was Medon; then, recov'ring spake....

'Thou boasted glory of th' Oilean house,

If e'er thy brother bow'd in rev'rence due  
 To thy superior virtues, let his voice  
 Be now regarded. From th' endanger'd fane,  
 My sister, fly. Whatever be my lot,  
 A troop select of Locrians shall transport  
 Thy sacred person where thy will ordains.  
 'Think not of me,' returns the dame. 'To Greece  
 Direct thy zeal. My peasants are conven'd,  
 That by their labour, when the fatal hour  
 Requires, with massy fragments I may bar  
 That cave to human entrance. Best belov'd  
 Of brothers, now a serious ear incline.  
 Awhile in Greece, to fortune's wanton gale,  
 His golden banner shall the Persian king,  
 Deluded, wave. Leonidas, by death  
 Preserving Sparta, will his spirit leave  
 To blast the glitt'ring pageant. Medon, live  
 To share that glory. Thee to perish here  
 No law, no oracle, enjoins. To die  
 Uncall'd, is blameful. Let thy pious hand  
 Secure Oileus from Barbarian force.  
 To Sparta, mindful of her noble host,  
 Entrust his rev'rend head.' Th' assembled hinds,  
 Youths, maidens, wives with nurselings at their breasts,  
 Around her now in consternation stood,  
 The women weeping, mute, aghast the men.  
 To them she turns.... 'You never, faithful race,  
 Your priestess shall forsake. Melissa here,  
 Despairing never of the public weal,  
 For better days in solitude shall wait,  
 Shall cheer your sadness. My prophetic soul  
 Sees through time's cloud the liberty of Greece  
 More stable, more effulgent. In his blood  
 Leonidas cements th' unshaken base  
 Of that strong tow'r, which Athens shall exult  
 To cast a shadow o'er the eastern world.'

This utter'd, tow'rd the temple's inmost seat  
 Of sanctity her solemn step she bends,  
 Devout, enraptur'd. In their dark'ning lamps  
 The pallid flames are fainting. Dim through mists  
 The morning peeps. An awful silence reigns.  
 While Medon pensive from the fane descends,

But instant re-appears. Behind him close  
Treads Melibœus, through the cavern's mouth  
Ascending, pale in aspect; not unlike  
What legends tell of spectres, by the force  
Of necromantic sorcery constrain'd;  
Through earth's dark bowels, which the spell disjoin'd,  
They from death's mansion, in reluctant sloth,  
Rose to divulge the secrets of their graves,  
Or mysteries of fate. His cheerful brow,  
O'erclouded, paleness on his healthful cheek,  
A dull, unwonted heaviness of pace,  
Forebode disastrous tidings. Medon spake....

'Turn, holy sister. By the gods belov'd,  
May they sustain thee in this mournful hour.  
Our father, good Oïleus, is no more!'

'Rehearse thy tidings, swain.' He takes the word....

'Thou wast not present when his mind, outstretch'd  
By zeal for Greece, transported by his joy  
To entertain Leonidas, refus'd  
Due rest. Old age his ardour had forgot,  
To his last waking moment with his guest  
In rapt'rous talk redundant. He at last,  
Compos'd and smiling in th' embrace of sleep,  
To Pan's protection at the island fane  
Was left. He wak'd no more. The fatal news,  
To you discover'd, from the chiefs I hide.'

Melissa heard, inclin'd her forehead low  
Before th' insculptur'd deities. A sigh  
Broke from her heart, these accents from her lips....

'The full of days and honours through the gate  
Of painless slumber is retir'd. His tomb  
Shall stand among his fathers, in the shade  
Of his own trophies. Placid were his days,  
Which flow'd through blessings. As a river pure,  
Whose sides are flow'ry, and whose meadows fair,  
Meets in his course a subterranean void;  
There dips his silver head, again to rise,  
And, rising, glide through flow'rs and meadows new;  
So shall Oïleus, in those happier fields  
Where never tempests roar, nor humid clouds  
In mists dissolve, nor white-descending flakes  
Of winter violate th' eternal green;

Where never gloom of trouble shades the mind,  
Nor gust of passion heaves the quiet breast,  
Nor dews of grief are sprinkled. Thou art gone,  
Host of divine Leonidas on earth!

Art gone before him to prepare the feast,  
Immortalizing virtue.' Silent here,  
Around her head she wraps her hallow'd pall.  
Her prudent virgins interpose a hymn,  
Not in a plaintive, but majestic flow,  
To which their fingers, sweeping o'er the chords,  
The lyre's full tone attemper. She unveils;  
Then, with a voice, a countenance, compos'd....

' Go, Medon, pillar of th' Oilean house.  
New cares, new duties, claim thy precious life.  
Perform the pious obsequies. Let tears,  
Let groans, be absent from the sacred dust  
Which heav'n in life so favour'd, more in death.  
A term of righteous days, an envy'd urn,  
Like his, for Medon is Melissa's pray'r.  
Thou, Melibœus, cordial, high in rank  
Among the prudent, warn and watch thy lord.  
My benediction shall reward thy zeal.'

Sooth'd by the blessings of such perfect lips,  
They both depart. And now the climbing sun  
To Xerxes' tent discover'd from afar  
The Persian captives with their mournful load.  
Before them rumour, through her sable trump,  
Breathes lamentation. Horror lends his voice  
To spread the tidings of disastrous fate  
Along Spercheos. As a vapour black,  
Which from the distant, horizontal verge  
Ascending, nearer still and nearer bends  
To higher lands its progress, there condens'd,  
Throws darkness o'er the valleys, while the face  
Of nature saddens round; so step by step,  
In motion slow, th' advancing bier diffus'd  
A solemn sadness o'er the camp. A hedge  
Of trembling spears on either hand is form'd.  
Tears, underneath his iron-pointed cone,  
The Scian drops. The Caspian savage feels  
His heart transpierc'd, and wonders at the pain.  
In Xerxes' presence are the bodies plac'd;

Nor he forbids. His agitated breast  
All night had weigh'd against his future hopes  
His present losses, his defeated ranks,  
By myriads thinn'd, their multitude abash'd,  
His fleet thrice-worsted, torn by storms, reduc'd  
To half its number. When he slept, in dreams  
He saw the haggard dead, which floated round  
Th' adjoining strands. Disasters new their ghosts  
In sullen frowns, in shrill upbraidings, bode.  
Thus, ere the gory bier approach'd his eyes,  
He in dejection had already lost  
His kingly pride, the parent of disdain  
And cold indifference to human woes.  
Not ev'n beside his sister's nobler corpse  
Her humble lover could awake his scorn.  
The captives told their piercing tale. He heard;  
He felt awhile compassion. But ere long  
Those traces vanish'd from the tyrant's breast.  
His former gloom redoubles. For himself  
His anxious bosom heaves, oppress'd by fear,  
Lest he, with all his splendour, should be cast  
A prey to fortune. Thoughtful near the throne  
Laconia's exile waits, to whom the king....

' O Demaratns, what will fate ordain?  
Lo! fortune turns against me. What shall check  
Her further malice, when her daring stride  
Invades my house with ravage, and profanes  
The blood of great Darius? I have sent  
From my unguarded side the chosen band,  
My bravest chiefs, to pass the desert hill;  
Have to the conduct of a Malian spy  
My hopes intrusted. May not there the Greeks,  
In opposition more tremendous still,  
More ruinous, than yester sun beheld,  
Maintain their post invincible, renew  
Their stony thunder in augmented rage,  
And send whole quarries down the craggy steeps,  
Again to crush my army? Oh! unfold  
Thy secret thoughts, nor hide the harshest truth.  
Say, what remains to hope? The exile here....

' Too well, O monarch, do thy fears presage  
What may befall thy army. If the Greeks,



Arrang'd within Thermopylæ, a pass  
 Accessible and practis'd, could repel  
 With such destruction their unnumber'd foes,  
 What scenes of havock may untrodden paths,  
 Confin'd among the craggy hills, afford?

Lost in despair, the monarch silent sat.  
 Not less unmurm'ring than Xerxes, from his place  
 Uprose Argestes; but, concealing fear,  
 These artful words deliver'd.... 'If the king,  
 Propitious, wills to spare his faithful bands,  
 Nor spread at large the terrors of his pow'r,  
 More gentle means of conquest than by arms,  
 Nor less secure, may artifice supply.  
 Renown'd Darius, thy immortal sire,  
 Bright in the spoil of kingdoms, long in vain  
 The fields of proud Enphrates with his host  
 O'erspread. At length, confiding in the wiles  
 Of Zopyrus, the mighty prince subdu'd  
 The Babylonian ramparts. Who shall count  
 The thrones and states by stratagem o'erturn'd?  
 But, if corruption join her pow'rful aid,  
 Not one can stand. What race of men possess  
 That probity, that wisdom, which the veil  
 Of craft shall never blind, nor proffer'd wealth,  
 Nor splendid pow'r, seduce? O Xerxes, born  
 To more than mortal greatness, canst thou find,  
 Through thy unbounded sway, no dazzling gift  
 Which may allure Leonidas? Dispel  
 The cloud of sadness from those sacred eyes,  
 Great Monarch, proffer to Laconia's chief  
 What may thy own magnificence declare,  
 And win his friendship. O'er his native Greece  
 Invest him sov'reign.' Thus procure his sword  
 For thy succeeding conquests.' Xerxes here,  
 As from a trance awak'ning, swift replies....

'Wise are thy dictates. Fly to Sparta's chief.  
 Argestes, fall before him. Bid him join  
 My arms, and reign o'er ev'ry Grecian state.'

He scarce had finish'd, when in haste approach'd  
 Artichus. Startled at the ghastly stage  
 Of death, that guardian of the Persian fair  
 Thus in a groan.... 'Thou deity malign,

O Arimanius, what a bitter draught  
 For my sad lips thy cruelty hath mix'd !  
 Is this the flow'r of women to my charge  
 So lately giv'n ? Oh ! princess, I have rang'd  
 The whole Spetchean valley, woods and caves,  
 In quest of thee, found here a lifeless corse.  
 Astonishment and horror lock my tongue.'

Pride now, reviving in the monarch's breast,  
 Dispell'd his black despondency awhile,  
 With gall more black effacing from his heart  
 Each merciful impression. Stern he spake....

' Remove her, satrap, to the female train.  
 Let them the due solemnities perform.  
 But never she, by Mithra's light I swear,  
 Shall sleep in Susa with her kindred dust,  
 Who by ignoble passions hath debas'd  
 The blood of Xerxes. Greece beheld her shame ;  
 Let Greece behold her tomb. The low-born slave ;  
 Who dar'd to Xerxes' sister lift his hopes,  
 On some bare crag expose.' The Spartan here....

' My royal patron, let me speak....and die,  
 If such thy will. This cold, disfigur'd clay  
 Was late thy soldier, gallantly who fought,  
 Who nobly perish'd, long the dearest friend  
 Of Hyperanthes, hazarding his life  
 Now in thy cause. O'er Persians thou dost reign ;  
 None more than Persians venerate the brave !'

' Well hath he spoke,' Artuchus firm subjoins.  
 ' But, if the king his rigour will inflict  
 On this dead warrior, Heav'n o'erlook the deed,  
 Nor on our heads accumulate fresh woes !  
 The shatter'd fleet, th' intimidated camp,  
 The band select, through Oeta's dang'rous wilds  
 At this dread crisis struggling, must obtain  
 Support from heav'n, or Asia's glory falls.'

Fell pride, recoiling at these awful words  
 In Xerxes' frozen bosom, yields to fear,  
 Resuming there the sway. He grants the corse  
 To Demaratus. Forth Artuchus moves  
 Behind the bier, nplifted by his train.

Argestes, parted from his master's side,  
 Ascends a car ; and, speeding o'er the beach,

Sees Artemisia. She the ashes pale  
Of slaughter'd Carians, on the pyre consum'd,  
Was then collecting for the fun'ral vase,  
In exclamation thus....' My subjects, lost  
On earth, descend to happier climes below....  
The fawning, dastard counsellors, who left  
Your worth deserted in the hour of need,  
May kites disfigure, may the wolf devour....  
Shade of my husband, thou salute in smiles  
These gallant warriors, faithful once to thee,  
Nor less to me. 'They tidings will report  
Of Artemisia, to revive thy love....  
May wretches like Argestes never clasp  
'Their wives, their offspring! Never greet their homes!  
May their unbury'd limbs dismiss their ghosts  
To wait for ever on the banks of Styx!

Then, turning tow'rd her son....' Come, virtuous boy,  
Let us transport these reliques of our friends  
To yon tall bark, in pen'lant sable clad.  
'They, if her keel be destin'd to return,  
Shall in paternal monuments repose.  
Let us embark. Till Xerxes shuts his ear  
To false Argestes, in her vessel hid,  
Shall Artemisia's gratitude lament  
Her bounteous sov'reign's fate. Leander, mark.  
The Doric virtues are not eastern plants.  
Them foster still within thy gen'rous breast;  
But keep in covert from the blaze of courts;  
Where flattery's guile, in oily words profuse,  
In action tardy, o'er th' ingenuous tongue,  
The arm of valour, and the faithful heart,  
Will ever triumph. Yet my soul enjoys  
Her own presage, that destiny reserves  
An hour for my revenge.' Concluding here,  
She gains the fleet. Argestes sweeps along  
On rapid wheels from Artemisia's view;  
Like night, protectress foul of heinous deeds,  
With treason, rape, and murder, at her heel,  
Before the eye of morn retreating swift,  
To hide her loathsome visage. Soon he reach'd  
Thermopylæ; descending from his car,  
Was led by Dithyrambus to the tent

Of Sparta's ruler. Since the fatal news  
 By Mycon late deliver'd, he apart  
 With Polydorns had consulted long  
 On high attempts; and, now sequester'd, sat  
 To ruminate on vengeance. At his feet  
 Prone fell the satrap, and began.... 'The will  
 Of Xerxes bends me prostrate to the earth  
 Before thy presence. Great and matchless chief,  
 Thus says the lord of Asia, "Join my arms;  
 Thy recompence is Greece. Her fruitful plains,  
 Her gen'rous steeds, her flocks, her num'rous towns,  
 Her sons, I render to thy sov'reign hand."  
 And, O illustrious warrior, heed my words.  
 Think on the bliss of royalty, the pomp  
 Of courts, their endless pleasures, trains of slaves,  
 Who restless watch for thee and thy delights.  
 Think on the glories of unrival'd sway.  
 Look on the Ionic, on the Æolian Greeks.  
 From them their phantom liberty is flown;  
 While in each province, rais'd by Xerxes' pow'r,  
 Some favour'd chief presides; exalted state,  
 Ne'er giv'n by envious freedom. On his head  
 He bears the gorgeous diadem; he sees  
 His equals once in adoration stoop  
 Beneath his footstool. What superior beams  
 Will from thy temples blaze, when gen'ral Greece,  
 In noblest states abounding, calls thee lord,  
 Thee only worthy! How will each rejoice  
 Around thy throne, and hail the auspicious day  
 When thou, distinguish'd by the Persian king,  
 Didst in thy sway consenting nations bless,  
 Didst calm the fury of unsparing war,  
 Which else had delug'd all with blood and flames!

Leonidas replies not, but commands  
 The Thespian youth, still watchful near the tent,  
 To summon all the Grecians. He obeys.  
 The king uprises from his seat, and bids  
 The Persian follow. He, amaz'd, attends,  
 Surrounded soon by each assembling band;  
 When thus at length the godlike Spartan spake....

'Here, Persian, tell thy embassy. Repeat  
 That, to obtain my friendship, Asia's prince

To me hath proffer'd sov'reignty o'er Greece.  
 Then view these bands, whose valour shall preserve  
 That Greece unconquer'd which your king bestows;  
 Shall strew your bodies on her crimson'd plains.  
 The indignation, painted on their looks,  
 Their gen'rous scorn, may answer for their chief.  
 Yet from Leonidas, thou wretch, inur'd  
 To vassalage and baseness, hear....The pomp,  
 The arts of pleasure in despotic courts,  
 I spurn, abhorrent! In a spotless heart  
 I look for pleasure. I from righteous deeds  
 Derive my splendour. No adoring crowd,  
 No purpled slaves, no mercenary spears,  
 My state embarrass. I in Sparta rule  
 By laws, my rulers, with a guard unknown  
 To Xerxes, public confidence and love.  
 No pale suspicion of th' empoison'd bowl,  
 Th' assassin's poniard, or provok'd revolt,  
 Chase from my decent couch the peace deny'd  
 To his resplendent canopy. Thy king,  
 Who hath profan'd by proffer'd bribes my ear,  
 Dares not to meet my arm. Thee, trembling slave,  
 Whose embassy was treason, I despise,  
 And therefore spare.' Diomedon subjoins....

' Our marble temples these Barbarians waste,  
 A crime less impious than a bare attempt  
 Of sacrilege on virtue! Grant my suit,  
 Thou living temple, where the goddess dwells.  
 To me consign the caitiff. Soon the winds  
 Shall parch his limbs on Oeta's tallest pine.'

Amidst his fury suddenly return'd  
 The speed of Alpheus. All, suspended, fix'd  
 On him their eyes impatient. He began....

' I am return'd a messenger of ill.  
 Close to the passage, op'ning into Greece,  
 That post committed to the Phocian guard,  
 O'erhangs a bushy cliff. A station there  
 Behind the shrubs by dead of night I took,  
 Though not in darkness. Purple was the face  
 Of heav'n. Beneath my feet the valleys glow'd.  
 A range immense of wood-invested hills,  
 The boundaries of Greece, were clad in flames;

An act of froward chance, or crafty foe,  
 To cast dismay. The crackling pines I heard;  
 Their branches sparkled, and the thickets blaz'd.  
 In hillocks embers rose. Embod'y'd fire,  
 As from unnumber'd furnaces, I saw  
 Mount high, through vacant trunks of headless oaks,  
 Broad-bas'd, and dry with age. Barbarian helms,  
 Shields, javelins, sabres, gleaming from below,  
 Full soon discover'd to my tortur'd sight  
 The straits in Persia's pow'r. The Phocian chief,  
 Whate'er the cause, relinquishing his post,  
 Was to a neighb'ring eminence remov'd;  
 There, by the foe neglected or contemn'd,  
 Remain'd in arms, and neither fled nor fought.  
 I stay'd for day-spring; then the Persians mov'd.  
 To-morrow's sun will see their numbers here.'

He said no more. Unutterable fear  
 In horrid silence wraps the list'ning crowd,  
 Aghast, confounded. Silent are the chiefs,  
 Who feel no terror; yet, in wonder fix'd,  
 Thick-wedg'd, enclose Leonidas around,  
 Who thus in calmest elocution spake....

' I now behold the oracle fulfill'd.

Then art thou near, thou glorious, sacred hour,  
 Which shalt my country's liberty secure.  
 Thrice hail, thou solemn period! Thee the tongues  
 Of virtue, fame, and freedom, shall proclaim,  
 Shall celebrate, in ages yet unborn.

Thou godlike offspring of a godlike sire,

To him my kindest greetings, Medon, bear.

Farewell, Megistias, holy friend, and brave!

Thou too, experienc'd, venerable chief,

Demophilus, farewell! Farewell to thee,

Invincible Diomedon! to thee,

Unequal'd Dithyrambus! and to all,

Ye other dauntless warriors, who may claim

Praise from my lips, and friendship from my heart,

You, after all the wonders which your swords

Have here accomplish'd, will enrich your names

By fresh renown. Your valour must complete

What our's begins. Here first th' astonish'd foe

On dying Spartans shall, with terror, gaze

And tremble, while he conquers. Then, by fate  
Led from his dreadful victory to meet  
United Greece in phalanx o'er the plain,  
By your avenging spears himself shall fail.'

Forth from th' assembly strides Plataea's chief....

' By the twelve gods, enthron'd in heav'n supreme,  
By my fair name, unsully'd yet, I swear  
Thine eye, Leonidas, shall ne'er behold  
Diomedon forsake thee. First let strength  
Desert my limbs, and fortitude my heart.  
Did I not face the Marathonian war?  
Have I not seen Thermopylae? What more  
Can fame bestow, which I should wait to share?  
Where can I, living, purchase brighter praise  
Than dying here? What more illustrious tomb  
Can I obtain, than, bury'd in the heaps  
Of Persians, fall'n my victims, on this rock  
To lie, distinguish'd by a thousand wounds?'

He ended; when Demophilus.... ' O king  
Of Lacedaemon, pride of human race,  
Whom none e'er equall'd but the seed of Jove,  
Thy own forefather, number'd with the gods,  
Lo, I am old! With falt'ring steps I tread  
The prone descent of years. My country claim'd  
My youth, my ripeness. Feeble age but yields  
An empty name of service. What remains  
For me, unequal to the winged speed  
Of active hours, which court the swift and young?  
What eligible wish can wisdom form,  
But to die well? Demophilus shall close  
With thee, O hero, on this glorious earth,  
His eve of life.' The youth of Thespia next  
Address'd Leonidas.... ' O first of Greeks,  
Me too think worthy to attend thy fame  
With this most dear, this venerable man,  
For ever honour'd from my tend'rest age,  
Ev'n till on life's extremity we part.  
Nor too aspiring let my hopes be deem'd.  
Should the Barbarian in his triumph mark  
My youthful limbs among the gory heaps,  
Perhaps remembrance may unnerve his arm  
In future fields of contest with a race,

To whom the flow'r, the blooming joys, of life  
Are less alluring than a noble death.'

To him his second parent....' Wilt thou bleed,  
My Dithyrambus? But I here withhold  
All counsel from thee, who art wise as brave.  
I know thy magnanimity. I read  
Thy gen'rous thoughts. Decided is thy choice.  
Come then, attendants on a godlike shade,  
When to th' Elysian ancestry of Greece  
Descends her great protector, we will shew  
To Harmatides an illustrious son,  
And no unworthy brother. We will link  
Our shields together. We will press the ground,  
Still undivided in the arms of death.  
So, if th' attentive traveller we draw  
To our cold reliques, wond'ring, shall he trace  
The diff'rent scene; then, pregnant with applause,  
"O wise old man," exclaim, "the hour of fate  
Well didst thou choose; and, O unequal'd youth,  
Who for thy country didst thy bloom devote,  
Mayst thou remain for ever dear to fame!  
May time rejoice to name thee! O'er thy urn  
May everlasting peace her pinion spread".'

This said, the hero with his lifted shield  
His face o'ershades; he drops a secret tear:  
Not this a tear of anguish, but deriv'd  
From fond affection, grown mature with time,  
Awak'd a manly tenderness alone,  
Unmix'd with pity, or with vain regret.

A stream of duty, gratitude, and love,  
Flow'd from the heart of Harmatides' son,  
Addressing straight Leonidas, whose looks  
Declar'd unspeakable applause....' O king  
Of Lacedæmon, now distribute praise  
From thy accustom'd justice, small to me,  
To him a portion large. His guardian care,  
His kind instruction, his example, train'd  
My infancy, my youth. From him I learn'd  
To live unspotted. Could I less than learn  
From him to die with honour? Medon hears.  
Shook by a whirlwind of contending thoughts,  
Strong heaves his manly bosom, under awe



Of wise Melissa, torn by friendship, fir'd  
By such example high. In dubious state  
So rolls a vessel, when th' inflated waves  
Her planks assail, and winds her canvass rend;  
The rudder labours, and requires a hand  
Of firm, delib'rate skill. The gen'rous king  
Perceives the hero's struggle, and prepares  
To interpose relief; when instant came  
Dieneces before them. Short he spake....

' Barbarian myriads through the secret pass  
Have enter'd Greece. Leonidas, by morn  
Expect them here. My slender force I spar'd.  
There to have died was useless. We return  
With thee to perish. Union of our strength  
Will render more illustrious to ourselves,  
And to the foe more terrible, our fall.'

Megistias last accosts Laconia's king....  
' Thou, whom the gods have chosen to exalt  
Above mankind in virtue and renown,  
O call not me presumptuous, who implore  
Among these heroes thy regardful ear.  
To Lacedæmon I a stranger came,  
There found protection. There to honours rais'd,  
I have not yet the benefit repaid.  
That now the gen'rous Spartans may behold  
In me their large beneficence not vain,  
Here to their cause I consecrate my breath.'

' Not so, Megistias,' interpos'd the king.  
' Thou and thy son retire.' Again the seer....

' Forbid it, thou eternally ador'd,  
O Jove, confirm my persevering soul;  
Nor let me these auspicious moments lose,  
When to my bounteous patrons I may shew  
That I deserv'd their favour. Then, my child,  
Dear Menalippus, heed the king's command,  
And my paternal tenderness revere.  
Thou from these ranks withdraw thee, to my use  
Thy arms surrend'ring. Fortune will supply  
New proofs of valour. Vanquish then, or find  
A glorious grave; but spare thy father's eye  
The bitter anguish to behold thy youth  
Untimely bleed before him.' Grief suspends

His speech, and interchangeably their arms  
Impart the last embraces. Either weeps,  
The hoary parent and the blooming son.

But from his temples the pontific wreath  
Megi tias now unloosens. He resigns  
His hallow'd vestments; while the youth in tears  
The helmet o'er his parent's snowy locks,  
O'er his broad chest adjusts the radiant mail.

Dieneces was nigh. Oppress'd by shame,  
His downcast visage Menalippus hid  
From him, who cheerful thus.... 'Thou need'st not blush,  
Thou hear'st thy father and the king command  
What I suggested, thy departure hence.  
Train'd by my care, a soldier thou return'st.  
Go, practise my instructions. - Oft in fields  
Of future conflict may thy prowess call  
Me to remembrance. Spare thy words. Farewell!'

While such contempt of life, such fervid zeal  
To die with glory, animate the Greeks,  
Far diff'rent thoughts possess Argestes' soul.  
Amaze and mingled terror chill his blood.  
Cold drops, distill'd from ev'ry pore, bedew  
His shiv'ring flesh. His bosom pants. His knees  
Yield to their burthen. Ghastly pale his cheeks;  
Pale are his lips, and trembling. Such the minds  
Of slaves corrupt; on them the beauteous face  
Of virtue turns to horror. But these words  
From Lacedæmon's chief the wretch relieve....

'Return to Xerxes. Tell him, on this rock  
The Grecians, faithful to their trust, await  
His chosen myriads. Tell him thou hast seen  
How far the lust of empire is below  
A freeborn spirit; that my death, which seals  
My country's safety, is indeed a boon  
His folly gives; a precious boon, which Greece  
Will by perdition to his throne repay.'

He said. The Persian hastens through the pass.  
Once more the stern Diomedon arose.  
Wrath overcast his forehead while he spake....

'Yet more must stay and bleed. Detested Thebes  
Ne'er shall receive her traitors back. This spot  
Shall see their perfidy aton'd by death,

Ev'n from that pow'r to which their abject hearts  
Have sacrific'd their faith. Nor dare to hope,  
Ye vile deserters of the public weal,  
Ye coward slaves, that, mingled in the heaps  
Of gen'rous victims to their country's good,  
You shall your shame conceal. Whoe'er shall pass  
Along this field of glorious slain, and mark  
For veneration ev'ry nobler corse,  
His heart, though warm in rapturous applause,  
Awhile shall curb the transport, to repeat  
His execrations o'er such impious heads,  
On whom that fate, to others yielding fame,  
Is infamy and vengeance.' Dreadful thus  
On the pale Thebans sentence he pronounc'd.  
Like Rhadamanthus, from th' infernal seat  
Of judgment, which inexorably dooms  
The guilty dead to ever-during pain;  
While Phlegethon his flaming volumes rolls  
Before their sight, and ruthless furies shake  
Their hissing serpents. All the Greeks assent  
In clamours, echoing through the concave rock.  
Forth Anaxander in th' assembly stood,  
Which he address'd with indignation feign'd.

' If yet your clamours, Grecians, are allay'd,  
Lo! I appear before you to demand  
Why these my brave companions, who alone  
Among the Thebans, through dissuading crowds,  
Their passage forc'd to join your camp, should bear  
The name of traitors? By an exil'd wretch  
We are traduc'd; by Demaratus driv'n  
From Spartan confines, who hath meanly sought  
Barbarian courts for shelter. Hath he drawn  
Such virtues thence, that Sparta, who before  
Held him unworthy of his native sway,  
Should trust him now, and doubt auxiliar friends?  
Injurious man! We scorn the thoughts of flight.  
Let Asia bring her numbers; unconstrain'd,  
We will confront them, and for Greece expire.'

Thus in the garb of virtue he adorn'd  
Necessity. Laconia's king perceiv'd,  
Through all its fair disguise, the traitor's heart.  
So, when at first mankind in science rude

Rever'd the moon, as bright in native beams,  
 Some sage who walk'd with nature through her works,  
 By wisdom led, discern'd the various orb,  
 Dark in itself, in foreign splendours clad.

Leonidas concludes.... 'Ye Spartans, hear;  
 Hear yon, O Grecians, in our lot by choice  
 Partakers, destin'd to enrol your names  
 In time's eternal record, and enhance  
 Your country's lustre: lo! the noontide blaze  
 Inflames the broad horizon. Each retire;  
 Each in his tent invoke the pow'r of sleep,  
 To brace his vigour, to enlarge his strength  
 For long endurance. When the sun descends,  
 Let each appear in arms. You, brave allies  
 Of Corinth, Phlius, and Mycenæ's towers,  
 Arcadians, Locrians, must not yet depart.  
 While we repose, embattled wait. Retreat  
 When we our tents abandon. I resign  
 To great Oileus' son supreme command.  
 Take my embraces, Æschylus. The fleet  
 Expects thee. To Themistocles report  
 What thou hast seen and heard.' 'O thrice farewell!  
 Th' Athenian answer'd.... 'To yourselves, my friends,  
 Your virtues immortality secure,  
 Your bright examples victory to Greece.'

Retaiping these injunctions, all dispers'd;  
 While in his tent Leonidas remain'd  
 Apart with Agis, whom he thus bespake....  
 'Yet in our fall the pond'rous hand of Greece  
 Shall Asia feel. This Persian's welcome tale  
 Of us, inextricably doom'd her prey,  
 As by the force of sorcery, will wrap  
 Security around her, will suppress  
 All sense, all thought of danger. Brother, know  
 That, soon as Cynthia from the vault of heav'n  
 Withdraws her shining lamp, through Asia's host  
 Shall massacre and desolation rage.  
 Yet not to base associates will I trust  
 My vast design. Their perfidy might warn  
 The unsuspecting foe, our fairest fruits  
 Of glory thus be wither'd. Ere we move,  
 While, on the solemn sacrifice intent,

As Lacedæmon's ancient laws ordain,  
Our pray'rs we offer to the tuneful nine,  
Thou whisper, through the willing ranks of Thebes,  
Slow, and in silence, to disperse and fly.'

Now left by Agis, on his couch reclin'd,  
The Spartan king thus meditates alone....

' My fate is now impending. O my soul,  
What more auspicious period couldst thou choose  
For death than now, when, beating high in joy,  
Thou tell'st me I am happy? If to live,  
Or die, as virtue dictates, be to know  
The purest bliss; if she her charms displays,  
Still lovely, still unfading, still serene,  
To youth, to age, to death; whatever be  
Those other climes of happiness unchang'd,  
Which heaven in dark futurity conceals,  
Still here, O virtue, thou art all our good.  
Oh! what a black, unspeakable reverse  
Must the unrighteous, must the tyrant prove;  
What in the struggle of departing day,  
When life's last glimpse, extinguishing, presents  
Unknown, inextricable gloom? But how  
Can I explain the terrors of a breast  
Where guilt resides? Leonidas, forego  
The horrible conception, and again  
Within thy own felicity retire;  
Bow grateful down to him, who form'd thy mind  
Of crimes unfruitful, never to admit  
The black impression of a guilty thought.  
Else could I fearless, by delib'rate choice,  
Relinquish life? This calm from minds deprav'd  
Is ever absent. Oft in them the force  
Of some prevailing passion for a time  
Suppresses fear. Precipitate they lose  
The sense of danger; when dominion, wealth,  
Or purple pomp, enchant the dazzled sight,  
Pursuing still the joys of life alone.  
But he, who calmly seeks a certain death,  
When duty only, and the gen'ral good,  
Direct his courage, must a soul possess,  
Which, all content deducing from itself,  
Can, by unerring virtue's constant light,

Discern when death is worthy of his choice.  
The man, thus great and happy, in the scope  
Of his large mind is stretch'd beyond his date.  
Ev'n on this shore of being he in thought,  
Supremely bless'd, anticipates the good,  
Which late posterity from him derives.'

At length the hero's meditations close.  
The swelling transport of his heart subsides  
In soft oblivion; and the silken plumes  
Of sleep envelope his extended limbs.

# LEONIDAS.

*BOOK XI.*

## The Argument.

*Leonidas, rising before sun-set, dismisses the forces under the command of Medon ; but, observing a reluctance in him to depart, reminds him of his duty, and gives him an affectionate farewell. He then relates to his own select band a dream, which is interpreted by Megistias ; arms himself, and marches, in procession with his whole troop, to an altar newly raised on a neighbouring meadow ; there offers a sacrifice to the muses ; he invokes the assistance of those goddesses ; he animates his companions ; then, placing himself at their head, leads them against the enemy in the dead of the night.*



# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK XI.

THE day was closing. Agis left his tent.  
He sought his godlike brother. Him he found  
Stretch'd o'er his tranquil couch. His looks retain'd  
The cheerful tincture of his waking thoughts,  
To gladden sleep. So smile soft ev'ning skies,  
Yet streak'd with ruddy light, when summer's suns  
Have veil'd their beaming foreheads. Transport fill'd  
The eye of Agis; friendship swell'd his heart;  
His yielding knee in veneration bent;  
The hero's hand he kiss'd, then fervent thus....

' O excellence ineffable, receive  
This secret homage; and may gentle sleep  
Yet longer seal thine eyelids, that, unblam'd,  
I may fall down before thee.' He concludes  
In adoration of his friend divine,  
Whose brow the shades of slumber now forsake.  
So, when the rising sun resumes his state,  
Some white-rob'd magus on Euphrates' side,  
Or Indian seer on Ganges, prostrate falls  
Before th' emerging glory, to salute  
That radiant emblem of th' immortal mind.

Uprise both heroes. From their tents in arms  
Appear the bands elect. The other Greeks  
Are filing homeward. Only Medon stops.  
Melissa's dictates he forgets awhile.  
All inattentive to the warning voice  
Of Melibæus, earnest he surveys  
Leonidas. Such constancy of zeal  
In good Oileus' offspring brings the sire  
To full remembrance in that solemn hour,  
And draws these cordial accents from the king....

' Approach me, Locrian. In thy look I trace  
Consummate faith and love. But, vers'd in arms,

Against thy gen'ral's orders wouldst thou stay?  
 Go, prove to kind Oileus that my heart  
 Of him was mindful, when the gates of death  
 I barr'd against his son. Yon gallant Greeks,  
 To thy commanding care from mine transferr'd,  
 Remove from certain slaughter. Last repair  
 To Lacedæmon. Thither lead thy sire.  
 Say to her senate, to her people tell,  
 Here didst thou leave their countrymen and king,  
 On death resolv'd, obedient to the laws.'

The Locrian chief, restraining tears, replies....  
 ' My sire, left slumb'ring in the island-fane,  
 Awoke no more.' ' Then joyful I shall meet  
 Him soon,' the king made answer. ' Let thy worth  
 Supply thy father's. Virtue bids me die,  
 Thee live. Farewell.' Now Medon's grief, o'er-aw'd  
 By wisdom, leaves his long-suspended mind  
 To firm decision. He departs, prepar'd  
 For all the duties of a man, by deeds  
 To prove himself the friend of Sparta's king,  
 Melissa's brother, and Oileus' son.

The gen'rous victims of the public weal,  
 Assembled now, Leonidas salutes,  
 His pregnant soul disburd'ning.... ' O, thrice hail!  
 Surround me, Grecians; to my words attend....  
 This evening's sleep no sooner press'd my brows,  
 Than o'er my head the empyreal form  
 Of heav'n-enthron'd Alcides was display'd.  
 I saw his magnitude divine. His voice  
 I heard, his solemn mandate to arise.  
 I rose. He bade me follow. I obey'd.  
 A mountain's summit, clear'd from mist or cloud,  
 We reach'd in silence. Suddenly the howl  
 Of wolves and dogs, the vulture's piercing shriek,  
 The yell of ev'ry beast and bird of prey,  
 Discordant grated on my ear. I turn'd.  
 A surface hideous, delug'd o'er with blood,  
 Beyond my view illimitably stretch'd,  
 One vast expanse of horror. There, supine,  
 Of huge dimension, cov'ring half the plain,  
 A giant corse lay mangled, red with wounds,  
 Dely'd in th' enormous flesh, which, bubbling, fed

Ten thousand thousand grisly beaks and jaws,  
 Insatiably devouring. Mute I gaz'd;  
 When from behind I heard a second sound,  
 Like surges tumbling o'er a craggy shore.  
 Again I turn'd. An ocean there appear'd  
 With riven keels and shrouds, with shiver'd oars,  
 With arms and weltring carcasses bestrewn,  
 Innumerable. The billows foam'd in blood.  
 But where the waters, unobserv'd before,  
 Between two adverse shores, contracting roll'd  
 A stormy current, on the beach forlorn  
 One of majestic stature I descri'd,  
 In ornaments imperial. Oft he bent  
 On me his clouded eyeballs. Oft my name  
 He sounded forth in execrations loud;  
 Then rent his splendid garments; then his head  
 In rage divested of its graceful hairs.  
 Impatient now he ey'd a slender skiff,  
 Which, mounted high on boist'rous waves, approach'd.  
 With indignation, with reluctant grief,  
 Once more his sight reverting, he embark'd  
 Amid the perils of the frowning deep.  
 "O thou, by glorious actions rank'd in heav'n,"  
 I here exclaim'd, "instruct me. What produc'd  
 This desolation?" Hercules reply'd;  
 "Let thy astonish'd eye again survey  
 The scene thy soul abhorr'd." I look'd. I saw  
 A land where plenty with disporting hands,  
 Pour'd all the fruits of Amalthea's horn;  
 Where bloom'd the olive; where the clust'ring vine  
 With her broad foliage mantled ev'ry hill;  
 Where Ceres with exuberance enrob'd  
 The pregnant bosoms of the fields in gold;  
 Where spacious towns, whose circuits proud contain'd  
 The dazzling works of wealth, along the banks  
 Of copious rivers shew'd their stately tow'rs,  
 The strength and splendour of the peopled land.  
 Then in a moment clouds obscur'd my view;  
 At once all vanish'd from my waking eyes.  
 'Thrice I saluted the omen,' loud began  
 The sage Megistias. 'In this mystic dream  
 I see my country's victories. The land,

The deep, shall own her triumphs; while the tears  
 Of Asia and of Libya shall deplore  
 Their offspring, cast before the vulture's beak,  
 And ev'ry monstrous native of the main.  
 These joyous fields of plenty picture Greece,  
 Enrich'd by conquest and Barbarian spoils.  
 He, whom thou saw'st, in regal vesture clad,  
 Print on the sand his solitary step,  
 Is Xerxes, foil'd and fugitive.' So spake  
 The rev'rend augur. Ev'ry bosom felt  
 Enthusiastic rapture, joy beyond  
 All sense and all conception, but of those  
 Who die to save their country. Here again  
 Th' exulting band Leonidas address'd....

' Since happiness from virtue is deriv'd....  
 Who for his country dies, that moment proves  
 Most happy, as most virtuous. Such our lot.  
 But go, Megistias; instantly prepare  
 The sacred fuel, and the victim due,  
 That to the muses (so by Sparta's law  
 We are enjoin'd) our off'rings may be paid  
 Before we march. Remember, from the rites  
 Let ev'ry sound be absent; not the fife,  
 Not ev'n the music-breathing flute, be heard.  
 Meantime, ye leaders, ev'ry band instruct  
 To move in silence.' Mindful of their charge,  
 The chiefs depart. Leonidas provides  
 His various armour. Agis close attends,  
 His best assistant. First a breastplate arms  
 The spacious chest. O'er this the hero spreads  
 The mailed cuirass, from his shoulders hung.  
 A shining belt infolds his mighty loins.  
 Next, on his stately temples he erects  
 The plumed helm; then grasps his pond'rous shield;  
 Where, nigh the centre, on projecting brass,  
 Th' inimitable artist had emboss'd  
 The shape of great Alcides, whom to gain  
 Two goddesses contended. Pleasure here  
 Won, by soft wiles, th' attracted eye; and there  
 The form of Virtue dignify'd the scene.  
 In her majestic sweetness was display'd  
 The mind sublime and happy. From her lips

Seem'd eloquence to flow. In look serene,  
 But fix'd intently on the son of Jove,  
 She wav'd her hand, where, winding to the skies,  
 Her paths ascended. On the summit stood,  
 Supported by a trophy near to heaven,  
 Fame, and protended her eternal trump.  
 The youth, attentive to her wisdom, own'd  
 The prevalence of Virtue; while his eye,  
 Fill'd by that spirit which redeem'd the world  
 From tyranny and monsters, darted flames,  
 Not undescri'd by Pleasure, where she lay  
 Beneath a gorgeous canopy. Around  
 Were flow'rets strewn, and wantonly in rills  
 A fount meander'd. All relax'd her limbs;  
 Nor wanting yet solicitude to gain,  
 What lost she fear'd, as struggling with despair,  
 She seem'd collecting ev'ry pow'r to charm:  
 Excess of sweet allurements she diffus'd  
 In vain. Still Virtue sway'd Alcides' mind.  
 Hence all his labours. Wrought with vary'd art,  
 The shield's external surface they enrich'd.

This portraiture of glory on his arm  
 Leonidas displays, and, towering, strides  
 From his pavilion. Ready are the bands.  
 The chiefs assume their station. Torches blaze  
 Through ev'ry file. All now in silent pace  
 To join in solemn sacrifice proceed.  
 First Polydorus bears the hallow'd knife,  
 The sacred salt and barley. At his side  
 Diomedon sustains a weighty mace.  
 The priest, Megistias, follows like the rest  
 In polish'd armour. White as winter's fleece,  
 A fillet round his shining helm reveals  
 The sacerdotal honours. By the horns,  
 Where laurels twine, with Alpheus, Maron leads  
 The consecrated ox. And lo! behind  
 Leonidas advances. Never he  
 In such transcendent majesty was seen,  
 And his own virtue never so enjoy'd.  
 Successive move Dienece the brave;  
 In hoary state Demophilus; the bloom  
 Of Dithyrambus, glowing in the hope

Of future praise; the gen'rous Agis next,  
Serene and graceful; last the Theban chiefs,  
Repining ignominious; then slow march  
The troops, all mute, nor shake their brazen arms.

Not from Thermopylæ remote, the hills  
Of Oeta, yielding to a fruitful dale,  
Within their side, half-circling, had enclos'd  
A fair expanse in verdure smooth. The bounds  
Were edg'd by wood, o'erlook'd by snowy cliffs,  
Which from the clouds bent, frowning. Down a rock,  
Above the loftiest summit of the grove,  
A tumbling torrent wore the shagged stone;  
Then, gleaming through the intervals of shade,  
Attain'd the valley, where the level stream  
Diffus'd refreshment. On its banks the Greeks  
Had rais'd a rustic altar, fram'd of turf.  
Broad was the surface, high in piles of wood,  
All interspers'd with laurel. Purer deem'd  
Than river, lake, or fountain, in a vase  
Old Ocean's briny element was plac'd  
Before the altar; and of wine unmix'd  
Capacious goblets stood. Megistias now  
His helm unloosen'd. With his snowy head  
Uncover'd, round the solemn pile he trod.  
He shook a branch of laurel, scatt'ring wide  
The sacred moisture of the main. His hand  
Next on the altar, on the victim strew'd  
The mingled salt and barley. O'er the horns  
Th' inverted chalice, foaming from the grape,  
Discharg'd a rich libation. Then approach'd  
Diomedon. Megistias gave the sign.  
Down sunk the victim by a deathful stroke,  
Nor groan'd. The augur bury'd in the throat  
His hallow'd steel. A purple current flow'd.  
Now smok'd the structure, now it flam'd abroad  
In sudden splendour. Deep in circling ranks  
The Grecians press'd. Each held a sparkling brand;  
The beaming lances intermix'd; the helms,  
The burnish'd armour multiply'd the blaze.  
Leonidas drew nigh. Before the pile  
His feet he planted. From his brows remov'd,  
The casque to Agis he consign'd; his shield,

His spear, to Dithyrambus; then, his arms  
Extending, forth in supplication broke...  
‘ Harmonious daughters of Olympian Jove,  
Who, on the top of Helicon ador’d,  
And high Parnassus, with delighted ears  
Bend to the warble of Castalia’s stream,  
Of Aganippe’s murmur, if from thence  
We must invoke your presence, or along  
The neighb’ring mountains with propitious steps  
If now you grace your consecrated bow’rs,  
Look down, ye Muses; nor disdain to stand  
Each an immortal witness of our fate.  
But with you bring fair Liberty, whom Jove  
And you must honour. Let her sacred eyes  
Approve her dying Grecians; let her voice  
In exultation tell the earth and heav’n  
These are her sons. Then strike your tuneful shells.  
Record us guardians of our parents’ age,  
Our matrons’ virtue, and our children’s bloom,  
The glorious bulwarks of our country’s laws,  
Who shall ennoble the historian’s page,  
Shall on the joyous festival inspire  
With loftier strains the virgin’s choral song.  
Then, O celestial maids, on yonder camp  
Let night sit heavy. Let a sleep like death  
Weigh down the eye of Asia. O infuse  
A cool, untroubled spirit in our breasts,  
Which may in silence guide our daring feet,  
Control our fury, nor by tumult wild  
The friendly dark affright, till dying groans  
Of slaughter’d tyrants into horror wake  
The midnight calm; then turn destruction loose.  
Let terror, let confusion, rage around;  
In one vast ruin heap the barb’rous ranks,  
Their horse, their chariots. Let the spurning steed  
Imbrue his hoofs in blood, the shatter’d cars  
Crush with their brazen weight the prostrate necks  
Of chiefs and kings, encircled, as they fall,  
By nations slain. You, countrymen and friends,  
My last commands retain. Your gen’ral’s voice  
Once more salutes you, not to rouse the brave,  
Or minds resolv’d and dauntless to confirm.

Too well by this expiring blaze I see  
Impatient valour flash from ev'ry eye.  
O temper well that ardour, and your lips  
Close on the rising transport. Mark how sleep  
Hath folded millions in its black embrace.  
No sound is wafted from th' unnumber'd foe.  
The winds themselves are silent. All conspires  
To this great sacrifice, where thousands soon  
Shall only wake to die. Their crowded train  
This night perhaps to Pluto's dreary shades  
Ev'n Xerxes' ghost may lead, unless reserv'd  
From this destruction to lament a doom  
Of more disgrace, when Greece confounds that pow'r  
Which we will shake. But look, the setting moon  
Shuts on our darksome paths her waning horns.  
Let each his head distinguish by a wreath  
Of well-earn'd laurel. Then the victim share,  
Then crown the goblet. Take your last repast;  
With your forefathers, and the heroes old,  
You next will banquet in the bless'd abodes.'

Here ends their leader. Through th' encircling crowd  
The agitation of their spears denotes  
High ardour. So the spiry growth of pines  
Is rock'd, when Æolus in eddies winds  
Among their stately trunks on Pelion's brow.  
The Acarnanian seer distributes swift  
The sacred laurel. Snatch'd in eager zeal,  
Around each helm the woven leaves unite  
Their glossy verdure to the floating plumes.  
Then is the victim portion'd. In the bowl  
Then flows the vine's empurpled stream. Aloof  
The Theban train, in wan dejection mute,  
Brood o'er their shame, or cast affrighted looks  
On that determin'd courage which, unmov'd  
At fate's approach, with cheerful lips could taste  
The sparkling goblet, could in joy partake  
That last, that glorious banquet. Ev'n the heart  
Of Anaxander had forgot its wiles,  
Dissembling fear no longer. Agis here,  
Regardful ever of the king's command,  
Accosts the Theban chiefs in whispers thus....  
' Leonidas permits you to retire.



While on the rites of sacrifice employ'd,  
None heed your motions. Separate, and fly  
In silent pace.' This heard, th' inglorious troop,  
Their files dissolving, from the rest withdraw.  
Unseen they moulder from the host, like snow,  
Freed from the rigour of constraining frost;  
Soon as the sun exerts his orient beam,  
The transitory landscape melts in rills  
Away; and structures, which delude the eye,  
Insensibly are lost. The solemn feast  
Was now concluded. Now Laconia's king  
Had reassum'd his arms. Before his step  
The crowd roll backward. In their gladden'd sight  
His crest, illumin'd by uplifted brands,  
Its purple splendour shakes. The tow'ring oak  
Thus from a lofty promontory waves  
His majesty of verdure. As with joy  
The sailors mark his heav'n-ascending pride,  
Which from afar directs their foamy course  
Along the pathless ocean; so the Greeks  
In transport gaze, as down their op'ning ranks  
The king proceeds; from whose superior frame  
A soul like thine, O Phidias, might conceive,  
In Parian marble or effulgent brass,  
The form of great Apollo; when the god,  
Won by the pray'rs of man's afflicted race,  
In arms forsook his lucid throne, to pierce  
The monster Python in the Delphian vale.  
Close by the hero Polydorus waits,  
To guide destruction through the Asian tents.  
As the young eagle near his parent's side  
In wanton flight essays his vig'rous wing,  
Ere long with her to penetrate the clouds,  
To dart impetuous on the fleecy train,  
And dye his beak in gore; by Sparta's king  
The injur'd Polydorus thus prepares  
His arm for death. He feasts his angry soul  
On promis'd vengeance. His impatient thoughts  
Ev'n now transport him furious to the seat  
Of his long sorrows, not with fetter'd hands,  
But now once more a Spartan, with his spear,  
His shield, restor'd, to lead his country's bands,

And with them devastation. Nor the rest  
Neglect to form. Thick-rang'd, the helmets blend  
The various plumes, as intermingling oaks  
Combine their foliage in Dodona's grove;  
Or as the cedars on the Syrian hills  
Their shady texture spread. Once more the king,  
O'er all the phalanx his consid'rate view  
Extending, through the ruddy gleam descries  
One face of gladness; but the godlike van  
He most contemplates: Agis, Alpheus there,  
Megistias, Maron, with Plataea's chief,  
Dieneces, Demophilus, are seen  
With Thespia's youth: nor they their steady sight  
From his remove, in speechless transport bound  
By love, by veneration, till they hear  
His last injunction. To their diff'rent posts  
They sep'rate. Instant on the dewy turf  
Are cast th' extinguish'd brands. On all around  
Drops sudden darkness; on the wood, the bill,  
The snowy ridge, the vale, the silver streun.  
It verg'd on midnight. Tow'rd the hostile camp,  
In march compos'd and silent, down the pass  
The phalanx mov'd. Each patient bosom hush'd  
In struggling spirit, nor in whispers breath'd  
The rapt'rous ardour virtue then inspir'd.  
So low'ring clouds along th' ethereal void,  
In slow expansion, from the gloomy north  
Awhile suspend their horrors, destin'd soon  
To blaze in lightnings, and to burst in storms.

# LEONIDAS.

*BOOK XII.*

## The Argument.

*Leonidas and the Grecians penetrate through the Persian camp to the very pavilion of Xerxes, who avoids destruction by flight. The Barbarians are slaughtered in great multitudes, and their camp is set on fire. Leonidas conducts his men in good order back to Thermopylæ; engages the Persians who were descended from the hills; and, after numberless proofs of superior strength and valour, sinks down covered with wounds, and expires the last of all the Grecian commanders.*

# LEONIDAS.

## BOOK XII.

A CROSS th' unguarded bound of Asia's camp  
Slow pass the Grecians. Through innum'rous tents,  
Where all is mute and tranquil, they pursue  
Their march sedate. Beneath the leaden hand  
Of sleep lie millions motionless and deaf,  
Nor dream of fate's approach. Their wary foes,  
By Polydorns guided, still proceed.  
Ev'n to the centre of th' extensive host  
They pierce unseen; when lo! th' imperial tent  
Yet distant rose before them. Spreading round  
Th' august pavilion, was an ample space  
For thousands in arrangement. Here a band  
Of chosen Persians, watchful o'er the king,  
Held their nocturnal station. As the hearts  
Of anxious nations, whom th' unsparing sword  
Or famine threaten, tremble at the sight  
Of fear-engender'd phantoms in the sky,  
Aerial hosts amid the clouds array'd,  
Portending wo and death; the Persian guard  
In equal consternation now descry'd  
The glimpse of hostile armour. All disband,  
As if auxiliar to his favour'd Greeks,  
Pan held their banner, scatt'ring from its folds  
Fear and confusion, which to Xerxes' couch,  
Swift-winged, fly; thence shake the gen'ral camp,  
Whose numbers issue naked, pale, unarm'd,  
Wild in amazement, blinded by dismay,  
To ev'ry foe obnoxious. In the breasts  
Of thousands, gor'd at once, the Grecian steel  
Reeks in destruction. Deluges of blood  
Float o'er the field, and foam around the heaps  
Of wretches slain, unconscious of the hand  
Which wastes their helpless multitude. Amaze,

Affright, distraction, from his pillow chase  
The lord of Asia, who in thought beholds  
United Greece in arms. Thy lust of pow'r!  
Thy hope of glory! whither are they flown,  
With all thy pomp? In this disastrous hour  
What could avail th' immeasurable range  
Of thy proud camp, save only to conceal  
Thy trembling steps, O Xerxes, while thou fly'st?  
To thy deserted conch, with other looks,  
With other steps, Leonidas is nigh.  
Before him terror strides. Gigantic death  
And desolation at his side attend.

The vast pavilion's empty space, where lamps  
Of gold shed light and odours, now admits  
The hero. Ardent throngs behind him press,  
But miss their victim. To the ground are hurl'd  
The glitt'ring ensigns of imperial state.  
The diadem, the sceptre, late ador'd  
Through boundless kingdoms, underneath their feet,  
In mingled rage and scorn, the warriors crush,  
A sacrifice to freedom. They return  
Again to form. Leonidas exalts  
For new destruction his resistless spear;  
When double darkness suddenly descends.  
The clouds, condensing, intercept the stars.  
Black o'er the furrow'd main the raging east  
In whirlwinds sweeps the surge. The coasts resound  
The cavern'd rocks, the crashing forests, roar.  
Swift through the camp the hurricane impels  
Its rude career; when Asia's numbers, veil'd  
Amid the shelt'ring horrors of the storm,  
Evade the victor's lance. The Grecians halt;  
While to their gen'ral's pregnant mind occurs  
A new attempt and vast. Perpetual fire  
Beside the tent of Xerxes, from the hour  
He lodg'd his standards on the Malian plains,  
Had shone. Among his Magi, to adore  
Great Horomazes was the monarch wont  
Before the sacred light. Huge piles of wood  
Lay nigh, prepar'd to feed the constant flame.  
On living embers these are cast. So wills  
Leonidas. The phalanx then divides,

Four troops are form'd, by Dithyrambus led,  
By Alpheus, by Diomedon. The last  
Himself conducts. The word is giv'n. They seize  
The burning fuel. Sparkling in the wind,  
Destructive fire is brandish'd. All, enjoin'd  
To reassemble at the regal tent,  
By various paths the hostile camp invade.

Now devastation, unconfin'd, involves  
The Malian fields. Among Barbarian tents,  
From diff'rent stations, fly consuming flames.  
The Greeks afford no respite; and the storm  
Exasperates the blaze. To ev'ry part  
The conflagration like a sea expands,  
One waving surface of unbounded fire.  
In ruddy volumes mount the curling flames  
To heav'n's dark vault, and paint the midnight clouds.  
So, when the north emits his purpled lights,  
The undulated radiance, streaming wide,  
As with a burning canopy, invests  
Th' ethereal concave. Oeta now disclos'd  
His forehead, glitt'ring in eternal frost,  
While down his rocks the foamy torrents shone.  
Far o'er the main the pointed rays were thrown;  
Night snatch'd her mantle from the ocean's breast;  
The billows glimmer'd from the distant shores.

But lo! a pillar huge of smoke ascends,  
Which overshades the field. There horror, there  
Leonidas, presides. Command he gave  
To Polydorus, who, exulting, shew'd  
Where Asia's horse and warlike cars possess'd  
A crowded station. At the hero's nod  
Devouring Vulcan riots on the stores.  
Of Ceres, empty'd of the ripen'd grain,  
On all the tribute from her meadows brown,  
By rich Thessalia render'd to the scythe.  
A flood of fire envelopes all the ground.  
The cordage bursts around the blazing tents.  
Down sink the roofs on suffocated throngs,  
Close-wedg'd by fear. The Libyan chariot burns.  
Th' Arabian camel and the Persian steed  
Bound through a burning deluge. Wild with pain,  
They shake their singed manes. Their madding hoofs

Dash through the blood of thousands, mix'd with flames,  
Which rage, augmented by the whirlwind's blast.

Mcantine the sceptred lord of half the globe  
From tent to tent precipitates his flight.  
Dispers'd are all his satraps. Pride herself  
Shuns his dejected brow. Despair alone  
Waits on th' imperial fugitive, and shews  
As round the camp his eye, distracted, roves,  
No limits to destruction. Now is seen  
Aurora, mounting from her eastern hill  
In rosy sandals, and with dewy locks.  
The winds subside before her; darkness flies;  
A stream of light proclaims the cheerful day,  
Which sees at Xerxes' tent the conqu'ring bands,  
All reunited. What could fortune more  
To aid the valiant, what to gorge revenge?  
Lo! desolation o'er the adverse host  
Hath empty'd all her terrors. Ev'n the hand  
Of languid slaughter dropt the crimson steel;  
Nor nature longer can sustain the toil  
Of unremitted conquest. Yet what pow'r  
Among these sons of Liberty reviv'd  
Their drooping warmth, new-strung their nerves, re-  
call'd

Their weary'd swords to deeds of brighter fame?  
What, but th' inspiring hope of glorious death  
To crown their labours, and th' auspicious look  
Of their heroic chief, which, still unchang'd,  
Still in superior majesty, declar'd  
No toil had yet relax'd his matchless strength,  
Nor worn the vigour of his godlike soul.

Back to the pass, in gentle march, he leads  
Th' embattled warriors. They behind the shrubs,  
Where Medon sent such numbers to the shades,  
In ambush lie. The tempest is o'erblown.  
Soft breezes only from the Malian wave  
O'er each grim face, besmear'd with smoke and gore,  
Their cool refreshment breathe. The healing gale,  
A crystal rill near Oeta's verdant feet,  
Dispel the languor from their harass'd nerves,  
Fresh brac'd by strength returning. O'er their heads,  
Lo! in full blaze of majesty appears



Melissa, bearing in her hand divine  
Th' eternal guardian of illustrious deeds,  
The sweet Phœbean lyre. Her graceful train  
Of white-rob'd virgins, seated on a range  
Half down the cliff, o'ershadowing the Greeks,  
All with concordant strings and accents clear,  
A torrent pour of melody, and swell  
A high, triumphal, solemn, dirge of praise,  
Anticipating fame. Of endless joys  
In bless'd Elysium was the song.... 'Go, meet  
Lycurgus, Solon, and Zaleucus sage,  
Let them salute the children of their laws.  
Meet Homer, Orpheus, and th' Ascræan bard,  
Who, with a spirit of ambrosial food  
Refin'd and more exalted, shall contend  
Your splendid fate to warble through the bow'rs  
Of amaranth and myrtle, ever young,  
Like your renown. Your ashes we will cull.  
In yonder fane deposited, your urns,  
Dear to the Muses, shall our lays inspire.  
Whatever off'rings genius, science, art,  
Can dedicate to virtue, shall be yours,  
The gifts of all the Muses, to transmit  
You on th' enliven'd canvass, marble, brass,  
In wisdom's volume, in the poet's song,  
In ev'ry tongue, through ev'ry age and clime;  
You of this earth the brightest flow'rs, not cropt,  
Transplanted only to immortal bloom  
Of praise with men, of happiness with gods.'

The Grecian valour on religion's flame  
To ecstasy is wafted. Death is nigh.  
As by the Graces fashion'd, he appears  
A beauteous form. His adamant gate  
Is half unfolded. All in transport catch  
A glimpse of immortality. Elate  
In rapturous delusion, they believe  
That to behold and solemnize their fate,  
The goddesses are present on the hills  
With celebrating lyres. In thought serene  
Leonidas the kind deception bless'd,  
Nor undeceiv'd his soldiers. After all  
Th' incessant labours of the horrid night,

Through blood, through flames, continu'd, he prepares  
In order'd battle to confront the pow'rs  
Of Hyperanthes from the upper straits.

Not long the Greeks in expectation wait  
Impatient. Sudden, with tumultuous shouts,  
Like Nile's rude current, where, in deaf'ning roar,  
Prone from the steep of Elephantis, falls  
A sea of waters, Hyperanthes pours  
His chosen numbers on the Grecian camp  
Down from the hills precipitant. No foes  
He finds. The Thebans join him. In his van  
They march conductors. On the Persians roll,  
In martial thunder, through the sounding pass.  
They issue forth, impetuous, from its mouth.  
That moment Sparta's leader gave the sign;  
When, as th' impulsive ram in forceful sway  
O'erturns a nodding rampart from its base,  
And strews a town with ruin, so the band  
Of serry'd heroes down the Malian steep,  
Tremendous depth, the mix'd battalions swept  
Of Thebes and Persia. There no waters flow'd.  
Abrupt and naked, all was rock beneath.  
Leonidas, incens'd, with grappling strength  
Dash'd Anaxander on a pointed crag;  
Compos'd, then gave new orders. At the word  
His phalanx, wheeling, penetrates the pass.  
Astonish'd Persia stops in full career.  
Ev'n Hyperanthes shrinks in wonder back.  
Confusion drives fresh numbers from the shore.  
The Malian ooze o'erwhelms them. Sparta's king  
Still presses forward, till an open breadth  
Of fifty paces yields his front extent  
To proffer battle. Hyperanthes soon  
Recals his warriors, dissipates their fears.  
Swift on the great Leonidas a cloud  
Of darts are show'r'd. Th' encount'ring armies close.

Who first, sublimest hero, felt thy arm?  
What rivers heard along their echoing banks  
Thy name, in curses sounding from the lips  
Of noble mothers, wailing for their sons?  
What towns with empty monuments were fill'd  
For those whom thy unconquerable sword

This day to vultures cast? First Bessus died,  
A haughty satrap, whose tyrannic sway  
Despoil'd Hyrcania of her golden sheaves,  
And laid her forests waste. For him the bees  
Among the branches interwove their sweets;  
For him the fig was ripen'd, and the vine  
In rich profusion o'er the goblet foam'd.  
Then Dinis bled. On Hermus' side he reign'd;  
He long assiduous, unavailing, woo'd  
The martial queen of Caria. She disdain'd  
A lover's soft complaint. Her rigid ear  
Was fram'd to watch the tempest while it rag'd,  
Her eye accusom'd on the rolling deck  
To brave the turgid billow. Near the shore  
She now is present in her pinnace light,  
The spectacle of glory crowds her breast  
With diff'rent passions. Valiant, she applauds  
The Grecian valour; faithful, she laments  
Her sad presage of Persia; prompts her son  
To emulation of the Greeks in arms,  
And of herself in loyalty. By fate  
Is she reserv'd to signalize that day  
Of future shame, when Xerxes must behold  
The blood of nations overflow his decks,  
And to their bottom tinge the briny floods  
Of Salamis; whence she with Asia flies,  
She only not inglorious. Low reclines  
Her lover now, on Hermus to repeat  
Her name no more, nor tell the vocal groves  
His fruitless sorrows. Next Maduces fell,  
A Paphlagonian. Born amid the sound  
Of chafing surges, and the roar of winds,  
He o'er th' inhospitable Euxine foam  
Was wont, from high Carambis' rock, to ken  
Ill-fated keels, which cut the Pontic stream;  
Then, with his dire associates, through the deep  
For spoil and slaughter guide his savage prow.  
Him dogs will rend ashore. From Medus far,  
Their native current, two bold brothers died,  
Sisamnes and Tithraustes, potent lords  
Of rich domains. On these Mithrines grey,  
Cilician Prince, Lileus, who had left

The balmy fragrance of Arabia's fields,  
With Babylonian Tenagon expir'd.

The growing carnage Hyperanthes views  
Indignant, fierce in vengeful ardour strides  
Against the victor. Each his lance protends.  
But Asia's numbers interpose their shields,  
Solicitous to guard a prince rever'd:  
Or thither fortune whelm'd the tide of war,  
His term protracting for augmented fame.  
So two proud vessels, lab'ring on the foam,  
Present for battle their destructive beaks;  
When ridgy seas, by hurricanes upturn,  
In mountainous commotion dash between,  
And either deck, in black'ning tempest veil'd,  
Wast from its distant foe. More fiercely burn'd  
Thy spirit, mighty Spartan. Such dismay  
Relax'd thy foes, that each Barbarian heart  
Resign'd all hopes of victory. The steeds  
Of day were climbing their meridian height.  
Continu'd shouts of onset from the pass  
Resounded o'er the plain. Artuchus heard.  
When first the spreading tumult had alarm'd  
His distant quarter, starting from repose,  
He down the valley of Spercheos rush'd,  
To aid his regal master. Asia's camp  
He found the seat of terror and despair:  
As in some fruitful clime, which late hath known  
The rage of winds and floods, although the storm  
Be heard no longer, and the deluge fled,  
Still o'er the wasted region nature mourns  
In melancholy silence; through the grove  
With prostrate glories lie the stately oak,  
Th' uprooted elm and beach; the plain is spread  
With fragments, swept from villages o'erthrown;  
Around the pastures, flocks, and herds are cast  
In dreary piles of death: so Persia's host,  
In terror mute, one boundless scene displays  
Of devastation. Half-devour'd by fire,  
Her tall pavilions and her martial cars  
Deform the wide encampment. Here in gore  
Her princes welter, nameless thousands there,  
Not victims all to Greeks. In gasping heaps

Barbarians, mangled by Barbarians, shew'd  
The wild confusion of that direful night,  
When, wanting signals, and a leader's care,  
They rush'd on mutual slaughter. Xerxes' tent  
On its exalted summit, when the dawn  
First streak'd the orient sky, was wont to bear  
The golden form of Mithra, clos'd between  
Two lucid crystals. This the gen'ral host  
Observ'd, their awful signal to arrange  
In arms complete, and numberless to watch  
Their monarch's rising. This conspicuous blaze  
Artuchus places in th' accustom'd seat.  
As, after winds have ruffled by a storm  
The plumes of darkness, when her welcome face  
The morning lifts serene, each wary swain  
Collects his flock dispers'd; the neighing steed,  
The herds forsake their shelter; all return  
To well-known pastures, and frequented streams:  
So now this cheering signal on the tent  
Revives each leader. From inglorious flight  
Their scatter'd bands they call, their wonted ground.  
Resumé, and hail Artuchus. From their swarms  
A force he culls. Thermopylæ he seeks.  
Fell shouts in horrid dissonance precede.

His phalanx swift Leonidas commands  
To circle backward from the Malian bay.  
Their order changes. Now, half-orb'd, they stand  
By Oeta's fence protected from behind,  
With either flank united to the rock.  
As by th' excelling architect dispos'd  
To shield some haven, a stupendous mole,  
Form'd of the grove and quarry's mingled strength,  
In ocean's bosom penetrates afar:  
There, pride of art, immovable it looks  
On Eolus and Neptune; there defies  
Those potent gods combin'd: unyielding thus,  
The Grecians stood a solid mass of war  
Against Artuchus, join'd with numbers new  
To Hyperanthes. In the foremost rank  
Leonidas his dreadful station held.  
Around him soon a spacious void was seen,  
By flight or slaughter in the Persian van.

In gen'rous shame and wrath Artuchus burns,  
Discharging full at Lacedæmon's chief  
An iron-studded mace. It glanc'd aside,  
Turn'd by the massy buckler. Prone to earth  
The satrap fell. Alcander aim'd his point,  
Which had transfix'd him prostrate on the rock,  
But for th' immediate succour he obtain'd  
From faithful soldiers, lifting on their shields  
A chief belov'd. Not such Alcander's lot.  
An arrow wounds his heart. Supine he lies,  
The only Theban who to Greece preserv'd  
Unviolated faith. Physician sage,  
On pure Cithæron healing herbs to cull  
Was he accustom'd, to expatiate o'er  
The Heliconian pastures, where no plants  
Of poison spring, of juice salubrious all,  
Which vipers, winding in their verdant track,  
Drink, and expel the venom from their tooth,  
Dipt in the sweetness of that soil divine.  
On him the brave Artontes sinks in death,  
Renown'd through wide Bithynia, ne'er again  
The clam'rous rites of Cybelé to share;  
While echo murmurs through the hollow caves  
Of Berecynthian Dindymus. The strength  
Of Alpheus sent him to the shades of night.  
Ere from the dead was disengag'd the spear,  
Huge Abradates, glorying in his might,  
Surpassing all of Cissian race, advanc'd  
To grapple; planting firm his foremost step,  
The victor's throat he grasp'd. At Nemea's games  
The wrestler's chaplet Alpheus had obtain'd.  
He summons all his art. Oblique the stroke  
Of his swift foot supplants the Persian's heel.  
He, falling, clings by Alpheus' neck, and drags  
His foe npon him. In the Spartan's back  
Enrag'd Barbarians fix their thronging spears.  
To Abradates' chest the weapons pass;  
They rivet both in death. This Maron sees,  
This Polydorus, frowning. Victims, strewn  
Before their vengeance, hide their brother's corse.  
At length the gen'rous blood of Maron warms  
The sword of Hyperanthes. On the spear

Of Polydorus falls the pond'rous ax  
Of Sacian Mardus. From the yielding wood  
The steely point is sever'd. Undismay'd,  
The Spartan stoops to rear the knotted mace  
Left by Artuchus; but thy fatal blade,  
Abrocomes, that dreadful instant watch'd  
To rend his op'ning side. Unconquer'd still,  
Swift he discharges on the Sacian's front  
A pond'rous blow, which burst the scatter'd brain.  
Down his own limbs meantime a torrent flows  
Of vital crimson. Smiling, he reflects  
On sorrow finish'd, on his Spartan name,  
Renew'd in lustre. Sudden to his side  
Springs Dithyrambus. Through th' uplifted arm  
Of Mindus, pointing a malignant dart  
Against the dying Spartan, he impell'd  
His spear. The point, with violence unspent,  
Urg'd by such vigour, reach'd the Persian's throat  
Above his corselet. Polydorns stretch'd  
His languid hand to Thespia's friendly youth,  
Then bow'd his head in everlasting peace;  
While Mindus, wasted by his streaming wound,  
Beside him faints and dies. In flow'ring prime  
He, lord of Colchis, from a bride was torn,  
His tyrant's hasty mandate to obey.  
She tow'rd the Euxine sends her plaintive sighs;  
She woos in tender piety the winds:  
Vain is their favour; they can never breathe  
On his returning sail. At once a crowd  
Of eager Persians seize the victor's spear.  
One of his nervous hands retains it fast,  
The other bears his falchion. Wounds and death  
He scatters round. Sosarmes feels his arm  
Lopt from the shoulder. Zatis leaves entwin'd  
His fingers round the long-disputed lance.  
On Mardon's reins descends the pond'rous blade,  
Which half divides his body. Pheron strides  
Across the pointed ash. His weight o'ercomes  
The weary'd Thespian, who resigns his hold,  
But cleaves th' elate Barbarian to the brain.  
Abrocomes darts forward, shakes his steel,  
Whose lightning threatens death. The wary Greek

Wards with his sword the well-directed stroke,  
Then, closing, throws the Persian. Now what aid  
Of mortal force, or interposing heav'n,  
Preserves the eastern hero? Lo! the friend  
Of Teribazus. Eager to avenge  
That lov'd, that lost companion, and defend  
A brother's life; beneath the sinewy arm  
Outstretch'd, the sword of Hyperanthes pass'd  
Through Dithyrambus. All the strings of life  
At once relax; nor fame, nor Greece, demand  
More from his valour. Prostrate now he lies  
In glories, ripen'd on his blooming head.  
Him shall the Thespian maidens in their songs  
Record, once loveliest of the youthful train,  
The gentle, wise, beneficent and brave,  
Grace of his lineage, and his country's boast,  
Now fall'n. Elysium to his parting soul  
Uncloses. So the cedar, which supreme  
Among the groves of Libanns bath tow'r'd,  
Uprooted, low'rs his graceful top, preferr'd,  
For dignity of growth, some royal dome  
Or heav'n-devoted fabric to adorn.  
Diomedon bursts forward. Round his friend  
He heaps destruction. Troops of wailing ghosts  
Attend thy shade, fall'n hero! Long prevail'd  
His furious arm in vengeance uncontroll'd;  
Till four Assyrians on his shelving spear,  
Ere from a Cissian's prostrate body freed,  
Their pond'rous maces all discharge. It broke.  
Still with a shatter'd truncheon he maintains  
Unequal fight. Impetuous, through his eye  
The well-aim'd fragment penetrates the brain  
Of one bold warrior; there the splinter'd wood,  
Infix'd, remains. The hero last unsheaths  
His falchion broad. A second sees aghast  
His entrails open'd. Sever'd from a third,  
The head, steel-cas'd, descends. In blood is roll'd  
The grizzly beard. That effort breaks the blade  
Short from its hilt. The Grecian stands disarm'd.  
The fourth, Astaspes, proud Chaldaean lord,  
Is nigh. He lifts his iron-plated mace.  
This, while a cluster of auxiliar friends



Hang on the Grecian shield, to earth depress'd,  
Loads with unerring blows the batter'd helm;  
Till on the ground Diomedon extends  
His mighty limbs. So, weaken'd by the force  
Of some tremendous engine, which the hand  
Of Mars impels, a citadel, high-tow'r'd,  
Whence darts, and fire, and ruins, long have aw'd  
Begirding legions, yields at last, and spreads  
Its disuniting ramparts on the ground;  
Joy fills th' assailants, and the battle's tide  
Whirls o'er the widening breach. The Persians thus  
O'er the late-fear'd Diomedon advanc'd  
Against the Grecian remnant; when behold  
Leonidas! At once their ardour froze.  
He had awhile behind his friends retir'd,  
Oppress'd by labour. Pointless was his spear,  
His buckler cleft. As, overworn by storms,  
A vessel steers to some protecting bay;  
Then, soon as timely gales inviting curl  
The azure floods, to Neptune shews again  
Her masts, apparell'd fresh in shrouds and sails,  
Which court the vigorous wind; so Sparta's king,  
In strength repair'd, a spear and buckler new  
Presents to Asia. From her bleeding ranks  
Hydarnes, urg'd by destiny, approach'd.  
He, proudly vaunting, left an infant race,  
A spouse, lamenting on the distant verge  
Of Bactrian Ochus. Victory in vain  
He, parting, promis'd. Wanton hope will sport  
Round his cold heart no longer. Grecian spoils,  
Imagin'd triumphs, pictur'd on his mind,  
Fate will erase for ever. Through the targe,  
The thick-mail'd corselet, his divided chest  
Of bony strength admits the hostile spear.  
Leonidas draws back the steely point,  
Bent and enfeebled by the forceful blow.  
Meantime within his buckler's rim, unseen,  
Amphistrens stealing, in th' unguarded flank  
His dagger struck. In slow effusion ooz'd  
The blood, from Hercules deriv'd; but death  
Not yet had reach'd his mark. Th' indignant king  
Gripes irresistibly the Persian's throat.

He drags him prostrate. False, corrupt, and base,  
Fallacious, fell, pre-eminent was he  
Among tyrannic satraps. Phrygia pin'd  
Beneath th' oppression of his ruthless sway.  
Her soil had once been fruitful; once her towns  
Were populous and rich. The direful change,  
To naked fields and crumbling roofs, declar'd  
Th' accurs'd Amphistreus govern'd. As the spear  
Of Tyrian Cadmus, rivetted to earth  
The pois'nous dragon, whose infectious breath  
Had blasted all Bœotia; so the king  
On prone Amphistreus trampling, to the rock  
Nails down the tyrant, and the fractured staff  
Leaves in his panting body. But the blood,  
Great hero, dropping from thy wound, revives  
The hopes of Persia. Thy unyielding arm  
Upholds the conflict still. Against thy shield  
The various weapons shiver, and thy feet  
With glitt'ring points surround. The Lydian sword,  
The Persian dagger, leave their shatter'd hilts;  
Bent is the Caspian scymetar; the lance,  
The javelin, dart and arrow, all combine  
Their fruitless efforts. From Alcides sprung,  
Thou stand'st unshaken, like a Thracian hill,  
Like Rhodope, or Hæmus; where in vain  
The thund'rer plants his livid bolt; in vain  
Keen-pointed lightnings pierce th' encrusted snow;  
And winter, beating with eternal war,  
Shakes from his dreary wings discordant storms,  
Chill sleet, and clatt'ring hail. Advancing bold,  
His rapid lance Abrocomes in vain  
Aims at the forehead of Laconia's chief.  
He, not unguarded, rears his active blade  
Athwart the dang'rous blow, whose fury wastes  
Above his crest in air. Then, swiftly wheel'd,  
The pond'rous weapon cleaves the Persian's knee  
Sheer through the parted bone. He sidelong falls,  
Crush'd on the ground beneath contending feet,  
Great Xerxes' brother yields the last remains  
Of tortur'd life. Leonidas persists;  
Till Agis calls Dieneces, alarms  
Demophilus, Megistias: they o'er piles

Of Alarodian and Sasperian dead  
Haste to their leader; they before him raise  
The brazen bulwark of their massy shields.  
The foremost rank of Asia stands and bleeds,  
The rest recoil: but Hyperanthes swift  
From band to band his various host pervades,  
Their drooping hopes rekindles, in the brave  
New fortitude excites, the frigid heart  
Of fear he warms. Astaspes first obeys,  
Vain of his birth, from ancient Belus drawn,  
Proud of his wealthy stores, his stately domes,  
More proud in recent victory: his might  
Has foil'd Plataea's chief. Before the front  
He strides impetuous. His triumphant mace  
Against the brave Dieneces he bends.  
The weighty blow bears down th' opposing shield,  
And breaks the Spartan's shoulder. Idle hangs  
The weak defence, and loads th' inactive arm,  
Depriv'd of ev'ry function. Agis bares  
His vengeful blade. At two well-levell'd strokes,  
Of both his hands, high brandishing the mace,  
He mutilates the foe. A Sacian chief  
Springs on the victor. Jaxartes' banks  
To this brave savage gave his name and birth.  
His look erect, his bold deportment, spoke  
A gallant spirit, but untam'd by laws,  
With dreary wilds familiar, and a race  
Of rude Barbarians, horrid as their clime.  
From its direction glanc'd the Spartan spear,  
Which, upward borne, o'erturn'd his iron cone.  
Black o'er his forehead fall the naked locks;  
They aggravate his fury; while his foe,  
Repeats the stroke and penetrates his chest.  
Th' intrepid Sacian through his breast and back  
Receives the grinding steel. Along the staff  
He writhes his tortur'd body; in his grasp  
A barbed arrow from his quiver shakes;  
Deep in the streaming throat of Agis hides  
The deadly point; then grimly smiles and dies.  
From him fate hastens to a nobler prey,  
Dieneces. His undefended frame  
The shield abandons, sliding from his arm.

His breast is gor'd by javelins. On the foe  
He hurls them back, extracted from his wounds.  
Life, yielding slow to destiny, at length  
Forsakes his riven heart; nor less in death  
Thermopylæ he graces than before  
By martial deeds and conduct. What can stem  
The barb'rous torrent? Agis bleeds. His spear  
Lies useless, irrecoverably plung'd  
In Jaxartes's body. Low reclines  
Dieneces. Leonidas himself,  
O'erlabour'd, wounded, with his dinted sword  
The rage of war can exercise no more.  
One last, one glorious effort age performs.  
Demophilus, Megistias, join their might.  
They check the tide of conquest; while the spear  
Of slain Dieneces to Sparta's chief  
The fainting Agis bears. The pointed ash,  
In that dire hand for battle rear'd anew,  
Blasts ev'ry Persian's valour. Back in heaps  
They roll, confounded; by their gen'ral's voice  
In vain exhorted longer to endure  
The ceaseless waste of that unconquer'd arm.  
So, when the giants from Olympus chas'd  
Th' inferior gods, themselves in terror shun'd  
Th' incessant streams of lightning, where the hand  
Of heav'n's great father with eternal might  
Sustain'd the dreadful conflict. O'er the field  
Awhile Bellona gives the battle rest,  
When Thespia's leader and Megistias drop  
At either side of Lacedæmon's king.  
Beneath the weight of years and labour bend  
The hoary warriors. Not a groan molests  
Their parting spirits; but in death's calm night  
All-silent sinks each venerable head.  
Like aged oaks, whose deep-descending roots  
Had pierc'd resistless through a craggy slope;  
There, during three long centuries, have brav'd  
Malignant Eurus, and the boist'rous north;  
Till, bare and sapless by corroding time,  
Without a blast, their mossy trunks recline  
Before their parent hill. Not one remains,  
But Agis, near Leonidas, whose hand

his last kind office to his friend performs,  
tracts the Sacian's arrow. Life, releas'd,  
rurs forth in crimson floods. O Agis, pale  
thy placid features, rigid are thy limbs;  
they lose their graces. Dimm'd, thy eyes reveal  
the native goodness of thy heart no more.  
Let other graces spring. The noble corse  
Leonidas surveys. A pause he finds,  
mark how lovely are the patriot's wounds,  
and see those honours on the breast he lov'd.  
But Hyperanthes from the trembling ranks  
Asia's tow'rs, inflexibly resolv'd  
the Persian glory to redeem, or fall.  
The Spartan, worn by toil, his languid arm  
lifts once more. He waits the dauntless prince.  
The heroes now stand adverse. Each awhile  
strains his valour. Each, admiring views  
a godlike foe. At length their brandish'd points  
arouse the contest, fated soon to close  
the long-continu'd horrors of the day.  
And in amaze and fear, the Asian throng,  
mov'd and silent, on their bucklers pause.  
On the wastes of India, while the earth  
beneath him groans, the elephant is seen,  
his huge proboscis writhing, to defy  
the strong rhinoceros, whose pond'rous horn  
is newly whetted on a rock. Anon  
both hideous bulk encounters. Earth her groan  
multiplies. Trembling, from their covert gaze  
the savage inmates of surrounding woods  
distant terror. By the vary'd art  
neither chief the dubious combat long  
a great event retarded. Now his lance  
pierces through the hostile shield Laconia's king  
appell'd. Aside the Persian swung his arm.  
Beneath it pass'd the weapon, which his target  
encumber'd. Hopes of conquest and renown  
late his courage. Sudden he directs  
his rapid javelin to the Spartan's throat.  
But he his wary buckler upward rais'd,  
which o'er his shoulder turn'd the glancing steel;  
for one last effort then his scatter'd strength

Collecting, levell'd with resistless force  
The massive orb, and dash'd its brazen verge  
Full on the Persian's forehead. Down he sunk,  
Without a groan expiring, as o'erwhelm'd  
Beneath a marble fragment, from its seat  
Heav'd by a whirlwind, sweeping o'er the ridge  
Of some aspiring mansion. Gen'rous prince! -  
What could his valour more? His single might  
He match'd with great Leonidas, and fell  
Before his native bands. The Spartan king  
Now stands alone. In heaps his slaughter'd friends,  
All stretch'd around him, lie. The distant foes  
Show'r on his head innumerable darts.  
From various sluices gush the vital floods;  
They stain his fainting limbs. Nor yet with pain  
His brow is clouded; but those beauteous wounds,  
The sacred pledges of his own renown,  
And Sparta's safety, in serenest joy  
His closing eye contemplates. Fame can twine  
No brighter laurels round his glorious head;  
His virtue more to labour fate forbids,  
And lays him now in honourable rest,  
To seal his country's liberty by death.

THE END.









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